



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

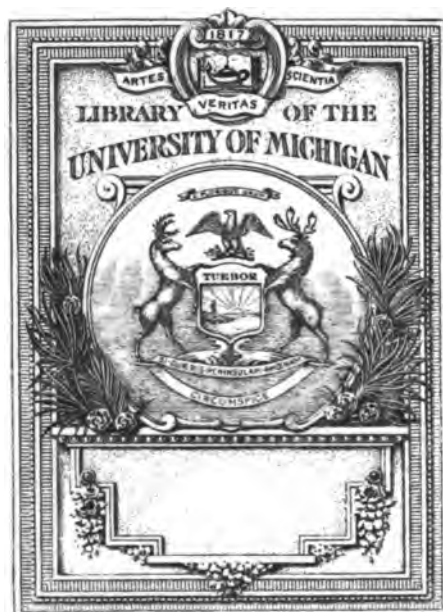
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



DA
777
.565

1

5

GALIC ANTIQUITIES:

CONSISTING OF
A HISTORY OF THE DRUIDS,
PARTICULARLY OF THOSE OF
C A L E D O N I A;
A DISSERTATION ON THE AUTHENTICITY
OF THE
P O E M S OF O S S I A N;
AND
A COLLECTION OF ANCIENT POEMS,
TRANSLATED FROM THE GALIC OF
ULLIN, OSSIAN, ORRAN, &c.

BY J O H N S M I T H,
MINISTER AT KILBRANDON, ARGYLSHIRE.

Antiquam exquirite matrem. VIRG.

EDINBURGH:
Printed for T. CADELL, LONDON;
and C. ELLIOT, EDINBURGH.
M DCC LXXX.

TO THE
NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN
WHO COMPOSE THE
G A L I C S O C I E T Y
I N L O N D O N,
THE FOLLOWING
P U B L I C A T I O N,
INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE ANTIQUITIES OF
THEIR COUNTRY,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR MOST OBEDIENT

AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

EDINBURGH,
March 1. 1780.

J O H N S M I T H.

Director
old settlers
11-12-46
56873

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following account of the Druids is, in a great measure, derived from remarks made on the remains of ancient customs and manners in the Highlands, or on some expressions and idioms still used in the Galic language. With these, the accounts given of this order by the Greek and Latin writers are compared, so as to reflect mutual light on each other, and lead us to a true judgment of the character of the Druids.

The Dissertation on the Authenticity of Ossian's Poems is likewise derived, in some measure, from observations on the language and customs of the Highlanders. These observations, it is hoped, will corroborate all the weighty arguments offered on this subject by the elegant writer of the *Critical Dissertation*, and by the ingenious author of the *Sketches of Man*.

A particular account of the Collection of Poems is prefixed to them; and many specimens of the original are given in the course of the notes. But as the Editor was apprehensive of encumbering the book with a language which only a few readers would understand, these specimens are not only contracted, but also printed on so small a letter, that they must appear greatly to the disadvantage. From these, however, such as they are, and from the translation and notes, some judgment may be formed of the whole of the Original, of which many request the publication. At their desire, the translator is ready to prepare it for the press, in as correct a form as possible, if he is encouraged to it either by subscription or otherwise. On a proper type and paper, he supposes it might make

2

Q 2-25 97 ANN

a volume, that could be furnished in boards at six shillings. Such as may choose to favour this undertaking, are requested to send their subscriptions to Mr ELLIOT in Edinburgh, or Mr CADELL in London, within six months. If there is not by that time a sufficient number to defray the trouble and expence of such a publication, the translator shall have at least the satisfaction of having done all in his power to preserve these remains of antiquity.—He is sensible, that, from the few specimens that are given of the Galic, the translation will appear to sink far below the beauty and sublimity of the original. Still, however, he hopes, that it retains many of those charms, which, in their native dress, have pleased and ravished for many centuries. But, whatever reception these pieces may meet with from the public in their present form, the translator shall reckon himself much honoured by the approbation and encouragement which some of the first judges of poetical composition have been already pleased to bestow upon them.

C O N T E N T S.

HISTORY of the DRUIDS.

	PAGE
CHAP. I. <i>Of the Establishment of the DRUIDS, and of their different Orders,</i>	1
CHAP. II. <i>Of the DRUIDS considered as Priests, with an ac- count of their religious faith and worship,</i>	12
CHAP. III. <i>Of the DRUIDS considered as Magistrates, with some account of their laws and judicial procedure,</i>	40
CHAP. IV. <i>Of the Philosophy of the DRUIDS,</i>	60
CHAP. V. <i>Of the Medical Profession of the DRUIDS,</i>	76
<i>Conclusion,</i>	80

A DISSERTATION on the AUTHENTICITY of the POEMS

of OSSIAN,	87
<i>Internal proofs,</i>	88
<i>External ———,</i>	93
<i>Answer to objections against such poems being composed in so early a period,</i>	99
————— <i>being preserved so long by oral tradition,</i>	118
————— <i>and being now so few and defective,</i>	113

ACCOUNT of the POEMS in the following COLLECTION, 126

DARGO; <i>Part I.</i>	133
<i>Part II.</i>	144
	GAUL.

	PAGE
GAUL,	151
DUTHONA,	173
DERMID,	187
FINAN <i>and</i> LORMA,	203
CATHLUINA,	217
CATHULA,	229
MANOS,	251
TRATHAL,	267
DARGO, <i>the Son of</i> DRUIVEL,	277
CUTHON,	293
<i>The Fall of</i> TURA,	313
CATHLAVA,	333
<i>The Death of</i> ARTHO,	347

C O R R E C T I O N S.

- P. 140. Notes, col. 2. l. 7. For *e'n 'n*, read *e'n*.
P. 242. l. 3. from bottom. For *Hill's left*, read *Hills left*.
P. 252. Notes, col. 2. l. 1. For *dan speur*, read *nan speur*.
P. 260. Notes, col. 2. l. 7. For *ann fheilidh*, read *an-fheilidh*.
P. 267. Notes, col. 2. l. penult. For *Muhic*, read *Mhic*.
P. 331. Notes, col. 2. l. 7. from bottom. For *Gealtiaich*, read *Gealaich*.

A
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
D R U I D S,
PARTICULARLY OF THOSE OF
C A L E D O N I A.

C H A P. I.

Of the Establishment of the DRUIDS, and of their different Orders.

THAT the antiquities of our own country are too much neglected, whilst those of other nations are eagerly and painfully inquired into, is an evil that has been long and generally complained of. There is nothing, perhaps, in which we have greater reason to lament this inattention of antiquaries to our own history, than in their almost total silence concerning the Druids. This order of men, if we consider their antiquity, extent, and duration, with the vast authority and learning which they were masters of, ought to have made a capital figure in the history of mankind.

kind. And yet the compass of a few pages might include all that is said of them by ancient or modern historians. As the Celtic philosophy was one of the parents of the Grecian*, we may judge, from this circumstance alone, that its professors deserved a better fate; and may justly regret, that more pains have not been taken to rescue its *Platos* and its *Homers* from that oblivion into which they fell.

THE order of the Druids is now too long extinct to speak of it with all the certainty and precision that might be wished for. The historians of those countries in which it prevailed, did not rise early enough to mark down any sketches of this phenomenon, before it disappeared; and those of other countries saw it at too great a distance, to make any accurate observations upon it. All that they have done serves only to excite our curiosity without satisfying it, and to make us regret the want of a history which seems to have been replete with instruction and entertainment.

NOTWITHSTANDING these misfortunes, we have still access to another source, from which we may derive, on this head, no inconsiderable degree of information. As the peculiar situation of the Highlands of Scotland preserved them from being ever subjugated to any foreign power, they retained their ancient religion in a pure and unadulterated state, longer than any other country around them. The Romans carried their gods as far as they did their eagle; but were not able to extend the one or the other over the mountains of Caledonia. Ever till the introduction of Christianity, these retained their religious establishment in its primitive simplicity. They were strangers to those legions of idols which
every

* Diog. Laërt. in præm.

every where else had been mixed with it. Here were raised to them no altars; here were offered to them no sacrifices. From these circumstances, and from the language which the Druids spoke being still used in this country, we may expect to find in its expressions and idioms, as well as in the customs of the people, surer traces to guide us to a right notion of the Druidical religion than can be found in the writers of Greece and Rome, who wrote often from prejudice†, or from hearsay, and who, at the best, could know but very little of a religion of which the first maxim was to conceal its tenets from strangers‡. Of these sketches or outlines, however, which ancient authors have drawn of Druidism, though with a light and careless pencil, we shall retain as many as possible, and search the language and customs of the country for some materials which may help to give the piece a more distinct colouring.

THE religion of the Druids is allowed to have been of the same antiquity with that of the Magi of Persia, Brachmans of India, and Chaldees of Babylon and Assyria*. Between the tenets of all these sects, in their earliest and most genuine state, there seems to have been such conformity as plainly evinces that they all sprung from the same common root, the religion of Noah and of the Antediluvians. Wherever the Celtic tribes, or posterity of Japhet, migrated, they carried this religion along with them; so that it was of the same extent with their dominions. According to the lowest cal-

A 2

culations,

† Vid. int. al. Joseph. cont. Apion. l. 1. these oaths recorded by Selden in Proleg.

‡ To this they were bound by oath at de Dis Syris, and by El. Sched. de Dis Germ. Syntag. 2. c. 16.

* Orig. contr. Celf. l. 5. Laërt. in præm. Clem. Alex. &c.

culations, these reached from the Danube to the Atlantic, and from the Mediterranean to the Baltic sea †. A more minute disquisition into the antiquity and extent of the Druidical religion might lead us too far out of our way, without giving us any prospect of having these points precisely ascertained ‡. We shall therefore proceed to make some observations upon that order of men who presided over this religion, and whose history may give us the clearest insight into that religion which they did profess.

THE Druids, who were the priests and philosophers of the Celts, had their name from the word *druidb*, which in their own language signifies *wise men*; and is still the Galic term for natural philosophers, or magicians *. It seems to have the same import with

† Anc. Un. Hist. vol. ii. c. 12.

‡ With regard to Cæsar's assertion that Druidism had its first rise in Britain, it can only be a conjecture founded on the high estimation in which the British Druids were then held, and on the concourse of disciples which flocked to them from all quarters, to learn the mysteries of a religion which had retained its purity in Britain longer than any where else, as the country was later of being conquered, and did not so readily open its bosom to the divinities of the Greeks and Romans. Cæsar might naturally think the religion of Britain to have no extract, when he supposed its inhabitants to have no origin.

If we could rely on the authority of those who affirm, that the Druids lived in the town of Dreux (or *Dru?ach*, the field of the Druids) in Chartrain, as early as the year 410 after the flood, it might

bring us very near the æra of its commencement in this island. *Ferrar. Lex. Topogr.* in verb. *Dreux*, vel *Drocum*.

Some have also supposed that Orpheus, who sailed on the Argonautic expedition about the year 1263 before the Christian æra, had acquired some of that mythology, which he imported into Greece, from the British and Gaulish Druids, as it appears he visited some of these countries at that time; unless we suppose with others, that the *Argonautica* were wrote by the later Orpheus of Crotona.

* The common derivation given of *Druid* has been from *druid* an oak. This was perhaps a natural thought to such as were better acquainted with the Greek than with the Celtic tongue; but they should consider, that the Druids had probably their name before the Greek language (of which a part is derived from the Celtic) had existed.

with the name of the Eastern *Magi*, who, like the Druids and many other religious sects †, united the character of the philosopher and the divine, and made both sciences one and the same profession. The religious creed and worship of men were, in the first ages, so simple, as to allow the priests to turn their chief thoughts to the study of natural philosophy, which they always pressed in to their service, either to promote their own ends, or those of religion.

THE sect of the Druids was very complex. With that class of men who were properly called *Druids*, it also comprehended the *Bards*, *Sennachai*, and *Eubages*, who were all subject to an *Arch-druid*, or supreme Pontiff ‡. These different classes of the Druidical priesthood seem to have been all subordinate to each other, and as it were so many gradations by which the Druids ascended to their eminence of knowledge and authority. In this, as in every other religion, before they could be initiated into the higher mysteries, it was necessary to pass through the other inferior orders, the education of the one still qualifying them for entering into the other. Of these ranks the *Eubages*, or *Eubates*, seem to have been the lowest. What this order were, it is difficult precisely to determine. In history their character is not distinctly marked, and in tradition it is left equally vague. Some have supposed them to be the same with the *Vates* and *Ouates*; which are manifestly no more than corruptions of the Celtic *Faidh*, or prophet. But this opinion we have some reason to doubt. The Greek and Latin writers were too well acquainted with the name and character

ter

† Laërt. Proem. Seg. 1. & 6.—Philosophi Egyptiorum Hierophantæ et Prophetæ.
Ib. not. Causab. ‡ Ib. Strab. l. 4. Cæf. l. 4. Am. Marcel. l. 15. &c.

ter of a prophet to mistake it so far, if it had been what they meant to express by Eubages. And the Druids, especially, were by much too jealous to devolve a privilege so very honourable, as the prescience of future events, upon an inferior class of men; as these undoubtedly were †. Nay, they seem not only to have been inferior to the Druids, but also to the Bards ‡. Marcellinus, indeed, says, that “ they searched into the sublimest properties of nature.” But probably this might be with a view to open and enlarge their minds, before they were admitted to offices of such importance to the public, as those of either the Bards or Druids. If to this we add, what seems to be the most obvious etymology of the name, we may perhaps have the true notion of the Eubages, though we dare not offer it as decisive. *Deu* or *deu* *'phaisfe*, which in the oblique cases sounds *'eu-vaisfe*, would readily be pronounced by a stranger *eubage*, or, with a proper termination, *eubages*. Now this word in the Celtic, signifies *good* or *promising youths*; such as the Druids, who had the whole management and education of the young, would naturally direct to the most important offices, which, without any respect to family or tribe, were always given to the most worthy.

NOR was merit less necessary to the advancement, than to the first admission, of every probationer for these sacred orders. On the application which they gave to study, and the proficiency which they made in science, it entirely depended, when, or whether, they should be raised to the station of *Sennachai*. These, according to tradition, and the etymology of the word *, were the chronologers,

ge-

† Strab. l. 4. Am. Marcel. l. 15.

‡ See Anc. Un. Hist. fol. vol. vii. p. 365.

* From *sennachas*, “ genealogy or history.” These were probably the *Σεμνονες*

of Laërtius, and the Semnonēs and Sennani that we read of in some other authors who treat of the religious orders of the Celts.

genealogists, and historians of the Celtic nation. When the mind was thus expanded by an acquaintance with history, and the memory stored with an ample fund of useful knowledge, the probationers would be advanced to the degree or class of *Bards*, if they were found to have a genius for poetry, and to be irreproachable in their moral character.

THE province of the bards was to celebrate the praises of heroes, and to immortalize their name in their songs. By repeating these constantly at their entertainments, and setting them off with all the charms of vocal and instrumental music, they excited in the minds of their hearers a love of virtue, a thirst of glory, and an enthusiasm for fame, which now we can scarce have any conception of †. They also accompanied the warriors to the field of battle *, that they might animate them, during the action, with such songs as were calculated to rouse their spirits, and to inspire them with intrepidity and contempt of death; and that they might be eye-witnesses of their behaviour, and know what degree of praise it merited in the song ‡. So great was the veneration in which this class of men was held, and such was the respect paid to the muses by the Celtic tribes, that we are told the interposition of a bard could stop, at once, a whole army in the very ardour of fighting †. It was not till after the Druids became extinct, that the bards, surviving every check under which they were held by that superior order, forfeited this high esteem, by conferring praise or censure where it was not due, as either interest swayed, or passion

† Dio. Sicul. l. 5. & l. 6. c. 9. Lucan. i. 447. Am. Marcel. l. 15. * Pausan. in Phoc. Tacit. annal. l. 14, c. 30. ‡ Torfæus in Orcad. præf. † Diod. Sicul. l. 6. c. 9.

sion influenced them. Whilst the Druids subsisted, the character as well as capacity of the bards must have been well tried, and long approved, before they were permitted to enter upon an office of such importance to the public, as that which they filled. It likewise depended upon their still maintaining and improving that character, whether they should ever be raised to that coveted station above them, which had been the great object of their ambition during a course of perhaps twenty years previous study and probation †.

As they were only the worthiest who would be allowed to reach this eminence, and as their life would be then far advanced, and their habits of virtue, by long practice, well confirmed, there was every reason to expect from the Druids a continuance of their good behaviour. Nothing but this could secure to them either their office or respect. But what would help most to keep their attention to character always awake was, that the Arch-druid was chosen, by the majority of voices, from the worthiest of their number §. The hope of attaining, one day, to this honour, would help to inspire them constantly with a laudable ambition to excel, and to distinguish themselves by the practice of every noble and amiable virtue. To the Arch-Druid, as to an infallible oracle, all doubtful and controverted cases were referred. He had the casting voice in all their assemblies, and there lay no appeal from his decision †.

THE

† Cæf. l. 6.

§ Ib.

† The Arch-Druid was called in Galic by the name of *Coibhi*, or *Coibhi' Druidh*. Vid. Dr. M'Pherson's Dissert. XIX.—The veneration in which his character was held, and the firm reliance which men had upon his assistance and friend-

ship, may be learnt from the following proverb :

“ Ge fagus clach do làr

“ 'S faigse na sin cabhair *Choibhi*.”

“ The stone is not so near the earth as the help of *Coivi* is to those who need his aid.”

THE province of the Druids, properly so called, was religion. Of this they were so remarkably jealous, that no kind of worship could be performed, nor any sacrifice public or private offered, without their presence and appointment *. Nor was this all: for as we shall see in the sequel, they managed matters so dexterously, that they engrossed all power, civil as well as religious; inasmuch that no business whatever, of any moment, could be done without their concurrence. Under the character of either priests, magistrates, philosophers, or physicians, they took every thing under their cognizance. This vast authority, with the other privileges and immunities annexed to the office, rendered it an object of ambition to many of the most distinguished families, and most aspiring geniuses. What these privileges were we shall briefly mention; and then consider the Druids under each of their characters, in the order in which they were just now mentioned.

THE Druids and their disciples were exempted from all taxes and tribute, and even from war if they chose it †. The magistrates of every city were annually chosen by them; the youth from their infancy were educated and formed by them; the kings themselves were their ministers, and could not, without their consent, declare peace or war, nor so much as call a council. The Druids in fact were the kings, and those who bore that name but the executioners of their sentence ‡. The first had all the power, the latter all the odium of sovereignty. They allowed him, we are told *, a precedence in matters of no real importance; such as the privilege of wearing seven colours in his *breacan* or *sagum*, while they them-

B

selves

* Cæf. l. 6. Strab. l. 4. † Lucan. l. 1. Cæf. l. 6. ‡ Tac. Germ. c. 11. Cæf. l. 7. Dio. Chrys. Orat. 49. Amm. Marcel. l. 15. Dio. Sicul. l. 6. c. 9. &c.

* See Toland's Lett. on the Druids.

selves were satisfied with six. But people seldom grudge to bow the knee before idols of their own erecting. And even in these matters, of no more than imaginary consequence, the Druids were not so far short of the king, as they were beyond all others. Persons of the greatest quality were allowed but four colours in their robe; and others, in proportion to their rank, still fewer. In the rest of their dress, as well as in this, the Druids assumed some distinguishing peculiarity. They wore long habits which reached to the heel †, whilst that of others came only to the knee. They wore their hair short, whilst that of others was long; and their beard long, whilst that of others, except their upper-lip, was generally short. They wore in their hand a white wand, called *slatan drui'eachd*, or magic wand; with an egg, or amulet of an oval shape, incased in gold, about their neck, and a white surplice over their shoulders, especially when they officiated *. Thus, no person could cast his eye upon a Druid without being struck with some badge of his office, which put him in mind of his distinction, and challenged reverence to it.

CONSIDERING the power and privileges of the Druids, we may well suppose their revenue was considerable, though we cannot ascertain it. Their number and rank would require it to be large, and their authority would enable them to make it so. Indeed, strictly speaking, every thing was in their own power; and the people may be said to have received their allowance from their hand, rather than they from the hand of the people. Of the moderation

† Vid. Himer. de Abar. ap. Photium.

* Vid. int. al. Cæf. et Plin. l. 16. c. 44. Strabo, l. 4.—Even in their very shoes, or sandals, which consisted of wood, and

were of a pentagonal shape, the Druids affected a difference and distinction from others. Aventin. Annal. Boi. l. 1. ap. El. Sched.

tion of the Druids, however, and of the mildness with which they exercised their sway, we need no other evidence than the length of time for which they subsisted. Had they been either cruel or oppressive, a rough, warlike, and unpolished race of men would not, for above two thousand years, have borne with them.

THIS moderation will appear the more remarkable, if we consider, that, as the Druids did not always live a single life, the desire of aggrandizing their own families might be a strong temptation to exceed the bounds of it. Some ancient authors indeed have made celibacy essential to this order; probably because a great many, from their love to abstracted study and contemplation, preferred it. But in this country, at least, and in Ireland, if we can give any faith to our traditions and our poems, they thought the conjugal state neither unlawful nor uncreditable †.

HAVING premised these general observations upon the order and institution of the Druids, we shall now proceed to take a more particular view of them, under each of those characters or offices with which they appear to have been invested.

† See Ossian's poem of *Dargo, the son of the Druid*, in the following Collection; and several instances in Toland's *Miscell.* p. 55.

It is probable the *Druidesses*, which some historians speak of, have been, generally, no other than the wives of the Druids, as tradition hath handed down

nothing concerning them. Nor is it unlikely, that the custom of giving the name of the Druids sometimes a masculine and sometimes a feminine termination, might somewhat multiply the number of these *Druidesses*; the *Druides* and the *Druides* being liable to be mistaken for the male and female of this order.

C H A P. II.

Of the DRUIDS, considered as Priests ; with an account of their religious Faith and Worship.

IT has been already observed, that the religion of the Druids was derived from Noah. We should therefore expect to find in it that simplicity which distinguished the patriarchal faith and worship. One God, no temple, no image, an altar of either turf or stone, an offering from the increase of the fold or of the field, accompanied with a pure heart and clean hands, are the features that should be most conspicuous in such a parent's offspring. It must be confessed, however, that the few sketches which are given us of Druidism are far from answering this description. But this may perhaps be the fault of those who drew the picture, and who, from their want of acquaintance with the original, or from their prejudice against it, might be disposed to give rather an ugly, than a real likeness. A fond partiality for their own religion, a contempt as well as ignorance of that of the Druids, and a fixed aversion to those nations among whom it prevailed, has evidently misled, in this case, the writers of Greece and Rome *. The worst of their own religion is what they often describe instead of this, which was not greatly corrupted till theirs came to be mingled with it.

THAT

* Vid. Joseph. cont. Apion. l. 1. — Anc. Un. Hist. *Of the Gauls*, § 2. — In the same manner, some of them have alleged that Bacchus was worshipped by the Jews, which even their bitter enemy Tacitus refutes. Comp. Plut. Sympos. l. 4. cum Tac. Hist. l. 5. c. 5.

* Pez-

THAT the patriarchal religion remained in its pristine purity among the Druids, for several ages, we may easily believe. The first corruptions which crept into it, any where, were probably some time after the reign of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mercury or Teutat, who were kings of the Celts much about the time of Terah, Abraham, and Isaac *. The hymns or songs, which, according to the Celtic manner, celebrated the exploits of those princes after their death, might lead the vulgar by degrees to pay them religious worship and adoration. It was also the custom of the Celts, as we find from Ossian, not only to rehearse these poems at their public meetings, but even to repeat them, at times, over the tombs of the departed. From this to superstition, the transition is short and easy. Accordingly, Jupiter was worshipped in Crete, while at Gnossus they could still point out his tomb †.

WHAT greatly helped to introduce this corruption into the Celtic religion, in those parts, is that Cres, the son of that Jupiter, was at the head of the Curetes ‡ or Druids, in that country at the time, and became after his father's death both priest and king *. Instead, therefore, of checking those extravagancies, he had every motive which his interest or vanity could suggest to help them on. Every mark of honour conferred upon the father, would naturally procure respect to the son. Perhaps a stately monument which had been raised over Jupiter's tomb, first induced the Druids in those parts to adopt temples. And if we only suppose the image of the dead set up in this monument, the floodgates were widely opened to

* Pezron Ant. Celt. c. 15, &c.

† Laëtant. l. 1. c. 11.

‡ The Druids had the name of *Curetes*, or *Cōretich*, (peacemakers), from their ex-

ercising the function of judges, and their settling of controversies.

* Pezron, c. 12.

† Gen-

to that idolatry and polytheism, which had infected most other nations before it seized the family of Japhet, on whom his father had entailed a peculiar blessing †.

WE are not, however to suppose, that countries so remote from Crete, and so little interested in the princes who reigned there, as Britain and Gaul were, would be so ready to pay divine honours to those distant and unknown heroes. Mankind, in general, are too tenacious of their religion to admit easily of such innovations, at least till they are once well hackneyed in them. The Druids, of these parts especially, were too jealous of their religious rites to suffer easily such encroachments. At any rate, had they been disposed to deify any mortal being, they could find, nearer home, heroes to whom they had been more obliged, or whom it was more their interest to flatter. We may therefore, on very good grounds, affirm with several learned antiquaries, that the Gaulish and British Druids did not give into idolatry and polytheism, till the Romans, after their conquests, had constrained them to it. Ancient authors, indeed, take no notice of this circumstance. They rather speak of the Druids of even these countries as worshipping a multiplicity of deities, prior to the introduction of their gods. At this we cannot be surprised, as it was natural for persons who saw their own country swarm with divinities, to think they must be equally numerous in other nations. It were easy to shew, further, that they were often misled, not more by this prejudice, than by appearances. Whenever they saw any ceremony that resembled any religious rite which they were acquainted with at home, they readily concluded, that here it had the same object, and the same mean-

† Gen. ix. 27.

meaning. Thus, if hymns were sung by the bards over a hero's tomb, they would infer it was in honour of some god, whose name they would gather from some other circumstance. Or if a person was struck with awe on hearing the *Taranich* or thunder, and thereby led to put up an ejaculation to the Deity, the *Taranis* itself would be construed to be the object of their worship.

AMONG the Greeks, there were many heaps of stones consecrated to Mercury*; and among the Latins, there were numberless rude pillars consecrated to the same divinity, under the denomination of *Faunus*. In Gaul and Britain, nothing was more frequent than heaps and pillars exactly similar to these; the first being monuments raised over the dead; and the last, signs of memorable events, or altars of the Druids. But a Roman soldier, left to his own conjecture, for the first maxim of their religion forbade the natives to instruct him on this head, would immediately conclude, that they were, as in his own country, symbols of Mercury. Hence we are told, that Mercury was the principal object of the Druidical worship†. The Romans would likewise see other ceremonies not unlike those performed by their countrymen to Apollo‡, from which they would infer, that these were in honour of the same deity. They saw these ceremonies performed on heaps which the natives called *carnus*; and therefore they joined the epithet of *Carneus* to Apollo§. They learnt that they were performed to a Being of whom

the

* Phurant. de nat. Deor. c. 16.

† Cæf. l. 6. &c.

‡ Vid. Sil. Ital. l. 5. v. 177.

§ The *Ta Karnia*, or *Carnæan games* of the Greeks, in which prizes were adjudged to the best musicians and poets, seem also to have been of the same ori-

gin. The great attention which the Celts and their Druids paid to music and poetry, makes it probable, that the laudable custom as well as the name of this festival had been borrowed from them. Vid. Plut. in Apophtheg.

* The

the *grian* or sun was considered as the symbol; and therefore they likewise gave to their Apollo the title of *Grannus*, and thought he was certainly the same with the *Be'il* worshipped by the Druids. Thus it was easy, if men judged from resemblances, to find many a Roman divinity in Britain, which, in fact, the natives had no knowledge of till after their intercourse with that people.

As a further presumption that polytheism did not prevail in these countries till after the invasion of the Romans, it may be observed, that, in the Galic or Celtic language, there is no word, no custom, no allusion, which gives the least hint of any of these pretended divinities. The names of the days of the week, by having the Latin word *dies* prefixed to them, shew of what extract they are, and how late they have been imported. That there is no hint of the names of any of these divinities in the Galic language is the more remarkable, as it abounds with numberless allusions to the name of *Be'il*, who is allowed to have been the supreme, and seems to have been the sole, object of their worship. The word *Bea'uil*, of which *Be'al* or *Be'il* is but the quick pronunciation or contraction, signifies the *life of every thing*, or the *source of all beings* *. This figurative name, so expressive of the peculiar nature and sovereign property of God, seems to have been devised by the Druids, on purpose, to guard against polytheism and every other wrong and mean notion of the Deity. For this reason, the word appears to have been much more generally used by them than their simple name for the Supreme Being, which was *Dia* or *Dbia* †, the same with

* The *Tuisco* of Germany, or *Teutates* of Gaul, had exactly the same meaning, 19.

signifying, " God the Father of all beings." Dr. Macpherson's *Antiq. Differt.* 19. † In the oblique cases it has *De* and *Dbe*.

with the *Iab* of the Hebrews; and therefore, in all probability, the common name by which he was expressed by both before their separation at Shinar.

NOTWITHSTANDING this clear designation which the Druids gave of the One Supreme Being, the creator and upholder of all things, the idea of such a pure Spirit was still too refined for the gross conceptions of the vulgar. "They went forward, and could not find him; and backward, but could not perceive him." Some object must therefore be found to represent to them this invisible Being. For this purpose the Druids fix upon the sun, the great reviver of nature, as the properest emblem of Him who was the *life of every thing*; being the most beneficial, as well as the most glorious object, which their eye could meet with. And lest the vulgar, who have always been prone to idolatry and superstition, should terminate their worship on the sun itself, instead of that great Being whom it was meant to shadow forth, the Druids took care that its very name*, which intimated that it was no more than fire, should guard them, as much as possible, against that error. That it always did so, we cannot say. But it is certain, that never did any priests take so much care as the Druids, to use such divinity-terms as might convey clear and distinct ideas of whatever they were meant to signify. Every term in their religion presents to the mind, in its very etymology, so clear and strong a light, as would be rather darkened than explained by the longest theological lecture.

C

To

Dhe. Of this, the *Efus* or *Hefus*, said to have been worshipped by the Druids, seems to have been only a corruption; and the *Θεός* and *Deus* of the Greeks and Latins were manifestly derived from it. * *Grian*, or *Gréine*, in the oblique cases, from *Grè* and *'heine*, the *nature or essence of fire*.

To this belief of one Supreme Being, for it does not appear that the Druids either acknowledged or worshipped any other deity †, we may add their belief of an evil and inferior Dæmon, whose constant study was to oppose and counteract the designs of the greatest and best Being. In all nations, the difficulty which men found in accounting for the origin of evil, or the tradition of its having been introduced into the world by an evil spirit, rendered this belief pretty universal. The particular doctrine of the Druids with regard to this being, we know not, as nothing is now to be found of him but the name. This is still used in the Galic to denote the Devil; the word *Diabhol* being only the Latin *Diabolus*, and of a much later date than the *Aibhifher** of the Druids.

No article of faith was more firmly believed and inculcated by the Druids, than *Fate* or predestination. To this day the Highlanders universally apply this doctrine, and derive from it on most occasions a considerable share of comfort. *Bba sud an DAN damb*, "such a thing was decreed for me," administers to the conscience a kind of opiate under many a bitter reflection.

THE Druids further held the immortality of the soul †, and a state of future rewards and punishments; in either of which, every person

† "*Unicus autem Deus a Celtis colebatur*," &c. Vid. El. Sched. de Dis. German. Syn. 1. c. 12.—"*Hefus, Tharamis, Belenus, unus tantummodo Deus*." Ib. 2. 26.—"*Unum Deum, fulgoris effectorem, Dominum hujus universi solum agnoscunt*." Procop. Goth. 1. 3.

* The analysis of this word is either *Ai-ti's-sar* (transposing the letter *s*) the

"opposer of the best being;" or rather *aibhifher*, "destroyer," from *Aibhif*, "ruin or destruction." Thus Ossian, speaking of the ruin of Lugar's house, in the poem of Cuthon, says

Ged' tha e'n diugh na *aibhif* shuair,
Bha e uair a b' aros righ.

† Am. Marcel. l. 15. Cæf. l. 6. &c.

person was to have that retribution which his good or bad conduct in life deserved. In this futurity, they cloathed the soul with a sort of airy vehicle, or lighter body, not altogether incapable of pleasure or pain. To these departed beings they allowed, in their own province and element, a considerable power; but allowed them little influence over the affairs of men.

OF the immortality of the soul the Druids seem to have had a much firmer and more invariable belief, than the priests or philosophers of the Greeks and Romans, who, excepting perhaps a few instances, might be said rather to wish and hope, than steadily to believe it. Whereas the Druids, by constantly inculcating this doctrine, procured to it not only a vague and general, but a steady and prevailing faith, in all the parts where their religion prevailed. But the firmness of this belief among the Celtic nations, and the influence which it must have had upon their conduct; will better appear when we come to speak of some of their funeral customs. In the mean time, let us consider what were the ideas which they had with regard to this future state of happiness and misery.

THE state of bliss, into which the souls of good and brave men were supposed by the Druids to enter immediately after their death, was called *Flath-innis*; which signifies, *the island of the brave or virtuous*, and is still used in the Galic to denote *heaven*. In this island there was an eternal spring, and an immortal youth. The sun shed always, there, its kindest influence. Gentle breezes fanned it, and streams of ever-equal currents watered it. The trees were alive with music, and bending to the ground with flowers and fruit. The face of nature, always unruffled and serene, diffused on every creature happiness, and wore a perpetual smile of

joy; whilst the inhabitants, strangers to every thing that could give pain, enjoyed one eternal scene of calm festivity and gladness. In short, every disagreeable idea was removed from the Druidical *Flatb-innis*, and no property was wanting to it which could recommend a Paradise. Indeed the tradition concerning the first paradise, which in the earliest stage of Druidism would be fresh and well known, might be the model on which they formed it*.

FROM the airy halls and other circumstances mentioned in the poems of Ossian, the situation of this happy place seems to have been in some calm, upper region, beyond the reach of every evil which infests this lower world. This, it must be allowed, was a far more agreeable site for it than that subterraneous region in which the Greeks and Latins placed their Elysian fields. However blessed those abodes may have been when reached, the descent and entrance to them, as described in the history of Æneas and Ulysses, are

* The following extract of an ancient Galic tale relating to the Celtic paradise, and translated by Mr Macpherson, will help to illustrate this subject.—“The *Isle* spread large before him like a pleasing dream of the soul; where distance fades not on the sight; where nearness fatigues not the eye. It had its gently-sloping hills of green; nor did they wholly want their clouds: But the clouds were bright and transparent; and each involved in its bosom the source of a stream; a beauteous stream, which wandering down the steep, was like the faint notes of the half-touched harp to the distant ear. The valleys were open, and free to the ocean; trees loaded with leaves which scarcely waved to the light breeze, were

scattered on the green declivities and rising grounds. The rude winds walked not on the mountain; no storm took its course through the sky. All was calm and bright; the pure fun of autumn shone from his blue sky on the fields. He hastened not to the west for repose; nor was he seen to rise from the east. He sits in his mid-day height, and looks obliquely on the *Noble Isle*.

In each valley is its slow-moving stream. The pure waters swell over the banks, yet abstain from the fields. The showers disturb them not; nor are they lessened by the heat of the sun. On the rising hill are the halls of the departed—the high-roofed dwellings of the heroes of old.” *Introduc. to Hist. of Brit. p. 183.*

are so full of horror, that the heart cannot, without great reluctance, be reconciled to them. The Druidical *Fla'innis* had in it nothing of this forbidding gloom. The passage to it was short and agreeable; and the soul, if it had no crime to clog it, would mount, with joy and ease, to this its native element. This notion of heaven, as it rendered death, in a good cause, rather agreeable than terrible, must have had a surprising effect in inspiring the Celtic tribes with courage in whatever cause their Druids held to be lawful. Accordingly, that contempt of death and intrepidity in war, which so remarkably distinguished this people, is generally ascribed to this cause †.

THE Hell of the Druids was in every respect the reverse of their *Fla'innis*, or Heaven. It was a dark, dismal region, which no ray of light, no friendly beam of the sun, ever visited. It was infested with every animal of the vile, venomous, and hurtful kind*. There, serpents stung and hissed, lions roared, and wolves devoured. The wretches, however, had not the privilege of dying. Prometheus-like, they still grew although they were still consumed. The most criminal were confined to caverns, or lower dungeons which

† Vobis auctoribus, umbræ,
Non tacitas Erebi sedes, Ditisque profundi
Pallida regna petunt: regit inde spiritus
artus
Orbe alio: longæ (canitis si cognita) vitæ
Mors media est. Certe populi, quos despicit Arctos,
Felicis errore suo, quos ille timorum
Maximus haud urget leti metus. *Inde
ruendi*
*In ferrum mens prona viris animæque
capaces*
Mortis.

LUCAN. lib. 1.

* See note on *Iorna*, in the poem of *Gaul*, in the following collection. We should not, on this head, build so much on the evidence of tales and tradition, if there had not been such conformity between them and the notions which other northern nations had of the same place. Of these, several instances may be seen in *Keyzler*, *Rudbeck*, and others who have wrote of the northern antiquities.

†—I₂

which were still more horrible. In the bottom of these they were almost immersed in snakes, whilst the roof constantly distilled poison. The least guilty, on the other hand, or such as were only *negatively* good, and led a life that was, though not vitious, yet in a great measure idle or useless, had their residence assigned them in thick fenny vapours, somewhat elevated above these dismal abodes †. The cold, too, was so intense in all these

“ Thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice,”

that the bodies of the inhabitants, which were supposed to be of a gross and cloggy nature on account of their guilt, must have been in a moment frozen to death, if it was possible for death to relieve them. It was from this last circumstance, which was thought the most terrible, and the groundwork of all the rest, that the place derived its name and general character. They gave it the name of *Ifurin* *, that is, *the isle of the cold land or climate*. It is remarkable, that in the Galic language this still continues to be the only name for hell, although believed, upon the best of evidences, to be in its qualities diametrically opposite. The first teachers of Christianity in that language adopted, it seems, the divinity-terms of the Druids, with which the people had already been acquainted, without ever scrutinizing their nature. The consequence was, that ideas quite opposite to their original meaning and etymology came by degrees to be affixed to some of them, as the two religions were of a very different genius. This, however,

† —“ In the lonely vale of streams, never on hills, or mossy vales of wind.”
abides the little soul. Years roll on, seasons return, but he is still unknown. In Temora, B. iv.
a blast comes cloudy death, and lays his grey head low. His ghost is rolled on the vapour of the fenny field. Its course is
* From *I*, an island, *fuar*, cold, and *shuinn*, land or climate. As the *sh* is quiescent, the word sounds *Ifurin*, and obliquely *Iurin*.

however, produces no manner of confusion, as even the critic himself seldom or never adverts to it. Accustomed to annex certain ideas to certain words from our infancy, the mind, at length, performs the operation so quickly and mechanically, that, by the time the judgment is ripe for such a work, it never thinks of stopping to analyse their constituent parts, or trace their etymology.

THIS notion of hell, which prevailed among the Celtic nations and their Druids, was, in their circumstances, not unnatural. If to be near the sun, the great symbol of their Divinity, and the great object of their regard, on account of this and its own usefulness, was happiness, it was consequently misery to be at a distance from it. Besides, every country, unguided by revelation, has always made its future punishments consist in the aggregate of all those evils which seemed, to it, the most grievous and terrible. Hence, in climates so disagreeably hot as greatly to incommode the inhabitants, such as Asia, Africa, and other eastern countries, men placed the seat of their hell in extreme heat, long before they had any express revelation concerning its nature. Thus Homer, whose countrymen had the most of their religion brought to them, by Orpheus and others, from the East, makes his hell a place

“ Where, chain’d on *burning* rocks, the Titans groan.”

IL. 5.

THE Celtic tribes, on the other hand, who were spread over the most of Europe, as well as the more northern Scythians, feeling more inconvenience from cold than from heat, placed the seat of their hell in the midst of eternal frosts and colds, being the idea which they most abhorred. It will appear still more natural for
them

them to have made this a principal ingredient in their future punishments, if we consider, that the climate of these countries has been then much colder than it is now, or has been for many ages back. The earliest accounts we have of even Italy, France, and Spain, describe their mountains as covered with almost perpetual snow; and speak of rivers, now seldom known to freeze, as covered, then, with such ice, as served for bridges to whole armies. The Romans were so sensible of this change, even in their time, that they ascribed it to some favourable alteration in the position of the earth, said to have been predicted by the famous Greek astronomer Hipparchus; but which is more naturally accounted for from the destroying of many vast forests, which excluded from the earth the rays of the sun, and stagnated the air; from the draining of lakes and marshes; the application of warm manures, and other consequences of cultivation.

THESE ideas of a future state which prevailed among the Druids, were so well adapted to the feelings of their people, that they could not fail to strike upon the heart in the most forcible manner. But what constituted the chief difference betwixt the future state of the Celts, and that of other ancient nations, was not any peculiar quality ascribed to it, but the respect and lively belief which had been procured to it by its Teachers, and the influence which this belief had upon mens conduct *. Among the Greeks and Romans, the philosophers did not greatly interest themselves in matters of religion;

* So firm was this belief, that it was customary with them to send, along with the dead, epistles to their departed friends, and sometimes to lend money on bills payable in the next world. Dio.

Sicul. l. 5. and Val. Maxim.---“ I should call them fools (says this last author) if Pythagoras in his cloak, had not thought just as these did in their plaids.”

* Tac.

gion; and the priests, whose particular province it was, only studied how to make their gain of it. To compass this end, and to please the superstitious vulgar, they made it consist, for the most part, of a long train of farcical and unmeaning ceremonies, which always eat up the vitals of religion wherever they prevail. With them, the nature of a future state in particular, that part of religion which has most influence on mens conduct, was entirely abandoned to the wanton fancy of their poets. These soon involved it in fable, and interlarded it with fiction. By this means, they not only ruined its credit with the vulgar, but made even philosophers themselves stagger, and almost call the truth of it in question. The fables of Elysium and Tartarus, on which every poet tried his invention, became very amusing stories, but had little or no influence on the heart and behaviour.

THE Druids, on the other hand, were the most zealous guardians of every part of their religion. No poet, nor any other person, was allowed to meddle or interfere with any part of it, nor so much as to mention any article of it, but with the greatest caution, and with the utmost reverence and respect. By this means religion, among them, always maintained its credit. Every body beheld it, at an awful distance, with that veneration which its own simplicity and importance, as well as the authority of its guardians, demanded to be paid it. This, together with the civil authority with which the Druids were invested, and some other causes which will fall more properly under our observation in another place, concurred to make the religion of the Celts a rule of life and practice. Among them, to have any comfort or credit here, or any hope of happiness hereafter, a man must have guided his life

D

by

by the precepts of religion, and by the direction of the Druid, on whose approbation his welfare in both worlds was supposed to be in a great measure depending. If we allow a Celt to have been formed of the same materials with a Greek or Roman, his religion ought certainly to make him a better man and a greater hero.

HAVING thus travelled through the religious creed of the Druids, we proceed now to take a brief view of their worship, and some other things which had a relation to it.

THE Druids, till their religion had been interlarded with that of other nations, had neither images nor temples. They meant by this to give the most august idea of the Supreme Being, and to guard against every thing that might give a low or limited notion of his nature and perfections. They thought it absurd, says Tacitus, to pourtray like a man, or circumscribe within walls, that Being who created the immensity of the heavens *.

THE Druidical places of worship were marked out by a circle of stones called *Clachan* †, which still continues to be the Galic term for a place of worship. These clachans, or circles, within the consecrated pale of which none were admitted but the Druids, were generally from twenty feet to twenty yards in diameter. Where the Druids held their larger assemblies, or general meetings, they sometimes exceeded this size, and had, within the outer precinct, another lesser circle or square ‡, which is supposed to have been the place of the Arch-druid, or president of the assembly.

The Druids affected to have the stones, which formed these circles,
of

* Tac. Germ. c. 9.

† *Clachan* literally signifies *stones*.

‡ See a description of one of these in Mr Pennant's Tour, vol. ii. p. 38. 3d edit.

of a vast size ; though the intention of them was only to mark the line of distinction between them and the profane vulgar. Some of these measure from fifteen to twenty feet in height, and sometimes more, with ten or twelve in circumference *. In the centre there was a stone of a still larger size than the surrounding ones, which served for the purpose of an altar. When this could not be got of a size to their mind, a large oblong flag, supported by pillars, was substituted by the Druids in place of it. As they had sometimes consecrated spots of ground, and even whole groves and lakes, which were held so sacred, that the largest treasures which were heaped in them could not tempt the laity to approach them †; so had they likewise altars, without having this pale to proclaim their sanctity. The size of these altars, which were called *cromleachs*, or *clach-fleacbda* ‡, was sometimes incredible. One in Pembrokeshire is said to have been twenty-eight feet high, and about twenty in circumference §. Another on the confines of Alsace, measured about thirty-six feet in circumference, twelve and a half in breadth, and more than four in thickness, being reared on a parcel of other stones, three or four feet above the earth's surface *. And the dimensions of a third in *Poitiers*, exceed both of these put together †.

In the Highlands and Western Isles, many of these altars and o-

D 2

belisks

* *Ib.* and Brand on *W. Isles*, p. 44.

† *Cæs. Com.* l. 6. *Diod. Sicul.* l. 5. c. 2. &c.

‡ *i. e.* the stone of worship or bending.

§ Toland's *Miscel.* p. 97.

* Keyzler, *Ant.* Sept.

† "La pierre levée de Poitiers a soixante pieds de tour, et elle est posée sur cinq autres pierres, sans qu'on sache non plus

ni pourquoi, ni comment." *Cberveau* Mem. d'Angl. 380. ap. Tol.—"I have reserved for the last of these prodigies, that amazing *rocking-stone* in the parish of Constantine, in Cornwall, which is 97 feet in circumference, 60 feet cross the middle, and computed to be about 750 ton weight." Dr Borlase, *Antiq. Cornwall.*

* Brand

belisks are still to be met with; some of them of a size that must "make any one wonder how, in those places and times, they got such large stones carried and erected *." Some of these, however, may have been originally intended as monuments to commemorate some remarkable event, or to point out the tomb of some distinguished hero. Our ancient poems tell us, that this custom was common, at least, among the Caledonians; and we find it practised very early among other nations. Thus Laban and Jacob reared a pillar in memory of their reconciliation, and the latter raised another over the grave of his beloved Rachel †. But allowing this to have been the primary design of some of these obelisks, yet from the prevailing opinion, that the *manes* of the dead, or some other guardian *genii*, were often near them, they were naturally calculated to inspire a reverence in those who approached them. Hence the Druids, who always took advantage of every circumstance that might favour their own purpose, might choose them, on occasions, for the place of holding their religious assemblies. It was probably the same consideration which first induced the Druids to hold some of their solemn meetings on cairns, which had been raised over the most respected dead, or which had been the monuments of some remarkable event or transaction. This, as we have observed above, might have led strangers to imagine that they were, on these occasions, worshipping Mercury, who was anciently represented in other countries by such emblems; having many heaps consecrated to him under the name of *Ερημναι*; and being himself, says Phurnutus, portrayed by "a square stone, without hands or feet ‡."

A-

* Brand, p. 46.
Nat. Deor. c. 16.

† Gen. xxxi. 45. and xxxv. 19, 20.

‡ De

AMONG the Ethiopians, Arabians, Greeks, and Romans, as well as among the Celts, such plain and rude pillars seem to have been used very early to mark out their places of worship †. Among all of them, it is probable, these pillars had originally the same meaning; some of them being monuments of events, and others symbols of the unity, stability, and power of God ‡. Among them all, a high degree of veneration seems also to have been paid to these objects. But the nature of this veneration seems to have been very different. Among the Ethiops and Arabs, it is generally allowed to have dwindled into downright idolatry; and among the Greeks and Romans, if it did not proceed thus far, yet it seems to have nearly approached it. That form of swearing, “Per Jovem lapidem,” seems to intimate, that they thought somewhat of the divinity had been residing in the stone itself. Whereas, among the Celts, this superstitious regard, owing to the attention of their Druids to all religious matters, never grew to such a height. The very name of these stones, as mentioned above, seems to prove; that they were only considered as marks to point out their places of worship. If this had not been the current idea of these *clachan*, or stones, at the introduction of Christianity, how should the word come to denote, then, and still, *a place of worship*? The names of the most venerated kind of their *tumuli* or heaps, shew, in like manner, that their ideas of them were far from any thing of an idolatrous regard. These were called *Si’uns**, or *mounts of peace*; and seem, from their very name, to have the same origin with that which Jacob and Laban raised in token of their mutual reconciliation.

† Among the Hebrews, also, pillars were very anciently used for the same purpose. Gen. iii. 14.

‡ Max. Tyr. Serm. 38.

* *Sis’-dbun*, “mount of peace, or reconciliation.”

tion †. The idea which the vulgar retain of these mounts, to this day, is, that they are inhabited by those inferior kinds of *genii* which have got the denomination of *fairies*. In Galic, these beings have derived their name from these mounts, as they probably did their origin from the awe, which the approach of these places ‡, (the repositories of the dead, or the scenes of some solemn ratification,) naturally inspired. From these ideas, which still are, and for as many ages back as the origin of the notion of fairies have been annexed to these mounts: and from the very meaning of the word *stun*, it is manifest, they were no appendages of idolatry or polytheism; and that the supposed Mercury, of whom they are utterly silent, had no concern with them.

THE Druids had generally those circles and altars, at which they performed their religious ceremonies, situated near the deep murmur of some stream, within the gloom of groves, or under the shade of some venerable oak*. Whether this tree, which they held in great veneration, was considered, from its usefulness, strength, and duration, as an emblem of the Divinity; or chosen on account of the shade it gave in heat, and the shelter it afforded in cold; or that the solemnity of the place might contribute to throw an awful cast over the mind, we shall not positively determine. Only it may be observed, that the last reason appears the most probable, if we consider the powerful tendency of such objects to dispose the mind for serious impressions †. To which we may add, that the Druids seem to have had no other emblem of the Deity but the sun; and that, in these cold countries, the oak was

† Gen. xxi. 46--48.
the mount of reconciliation.”
and Tac. Germ. c. 9.

‡ *Séichean*, or *daoine-sí*, “the men who dwell in
* Plin. passim. Cas. l. 6. c. 4. Luc. l. 3.
† Vid. Senec. ep. 41.

was no great security against the inclemency which most incommoded them, being bare at the season in which they stood most in need of shelter. Be this as it will, groves were the common appendages of all ancient religions, whether false or true. The patriarchs chose them for the place of their devotion; and where they did not find them, planted them †. And we find the degenerate Israelites, and the other nations around them, frequently blamed by the prophets for the abuse to which this practice by degrees led them *. Like these, too, the Druids had their *high places*, or eminences, in sight of the sun, where those *carns* were often situated, on which some of their religious ceremonies, and particularly their courts of judicature, were held. It does not appear, however, that the inhabitants of these countries paid to either of these places the same degree of superstitious regard. Perhaps the coldness of their climate, no less than the attention of their Druids, might check this tendency, and prevent its growing to that luxuriant extravagance which the heat of the climate might communicate to the constitution of the eastern nations.

Of the festivals of the Druids, the *Be'il-tin* and *Samb'-in* † were the principal. The first was held on the beginning of May, and is still the Galic name for Whit Sunday ‡. On this occasion, as the word *Be'il-tin*, or *fire of Be'il*, implies, great rejoicings were made,

and

† Gen. xxi. 33.—Groves were also the most ancient temples of the Romans. Plin. xii. 1.

* 2 Kings xvi. 4. Hof. iv. 13. Numb. xxiv. 14, &c.

† The one from *Be'il*, their name for the Deity, and *tein*, fire; the other from *samb*, peace, and *thein'*, fire, the *th* quiet-

cent. *Samb* is now for the most part changed into *tamb*; but its compounds all retain the *s*, as *sambach*, *sambchair*, &c.

‡ It was at this time that the Celts and Druids began their year, as appears from the Galic name still used for the month of May, being *ceit'-uin*, (or *ceud-uin*), the *first month* or *time*.

and a large bonfire kindled, to congratulate the return of that beneficent luminary, which was considered as the emblem of the Supreme Being. The other of these solemnities was held upon Hallow-eve, which, in Galic, still retains the name of *Samb-'in*. The word signifies *the fire of peace*, or the time of kindling the fire for maintaining the peace. It was at this season that the Druids annually met in the most central places of every country, to adjust every dispute, and decide every controversy*. On that occasion, all the fire in the country was extinguished on the preceding evening, in order to be supplied, the next day, by a portion of the holy fire which was kindled and consecrated by the Druids. Of this, no person who had infringed the peace, or was become obnoxious by any breach of law, or any failure in duty, was to have any share, till he had first made all the reparation and submission which the Druids required of him. Whoever did not with the most implicit obedience agree to this, had the sentence of excommunication, more dreaded than death, immediately denounced against him†. None was allowed to give him house or fire, or shew him the least office of humanity, under the penalty of incurring the same sentence. So that he and his family, if he had one, had before them a truly melancholy prospect, in a cold country, upon the approach of winter. Nothing but that *eternal cold*, to which this was considered as the sure prelude, could appear so terrible. The address of the Druids in fixing their assizes to this season, when every man's feeling prompted him to submission; and their contrivance of an institution, which not only gave them absolute power over the people, but also secured the public peace better than all the

fanc-

* Cas. l. 6. c. 13.

† Ib.

functions of modern laws, are very remarkable. In many parts of Scotland, these Hallow-eve fires continue still to be kindled *; and, in some places, should any family, through negligence, allow their fire to go out on that night or on Whitsuntide, they may find a difficulty in getting a supply from their neighbours the next morning. So hard it is to eradicate the remains of superstition, however ridiculous or absurd its tenets.

BESIDES these two great festivals, the Druids observed the full moon †, and the sixth day of it, on which they gathered their *mistle*; with some other seasons, which were regulated by the phases of the same planet, the progress of the sun through the zodiac ‡, or the return of days instituted in commemoration of some remarkable events.

WE next inquire what kind of sacrifices were offered on these occasions by the Druids. Many have charged them with ceremonies, which, if true, they had good reason to perform in the darkest shades, and to conceal industriously from the public view. If the Druids ever offered any human sacrifices, it is no more than most other ancient nations, and even the Greeks and Romans, are known to have been often guilty of §. From the general strain of simplicity and good sense which ran through the religion of the Druids, one would be tempted to think, that it was after their intercourse with

E

some

* The Galic councils forbade this practice, in their territories, under pain of death. Borlase, Ant. Corn. p. 131.

† Strabo, l. 3. Plin. l. 16. c. 44, &c.

‡ That the Druids of the British isles were acquainted with the constellations, and with the signs of the zodiac, appears from Plutarch, who says, that the inha-

bitants of these places observed every thirtieth year a solemn festival in honour of Saturn, when his star entered the sign of Taurus. Plut. de Defect. Oracul.—et de facie in orbe Lunæ.

§ Tertull. in Apol. Lactant. Elias Sched. de Dis Germ. Syn. 2. c. 31. et auct. citat. ab iis.

some of these, which was the æra of every corruption in their religion, that they practised this horrid rite, if ever they did so at all. Some authors have taken great pains to exculpate them from this charge, even from the testimony of ancient writers *. As the honour of human nature and of our country may dispose us to wish, so many presumptions may lead us to believe, this opinion to be well founded. Those who have charged the Druids with the fact, were greatly prejudiced against them, as they were the persons who, from their love of liberty and vast influence over the people, made the most strenuous opposition to the encroachments of every foreign power. They often stirred up the people to revolt, and shake off the yoke of the usurpers. This was enough to render them obnoxious to those who estimated the barbarity of any people, from the degree of bravery with which they opposed their natural enemies †. It was enough to make them throw every possible slur upon their character, in order to raise against them a general detestation. That pride, likewise, which led the Greeks and Romans to give all nations but their own the appellation of Barbarians, would make them treat with indignation and contempt, the best institutions of the Druids. And the ignorance of these writers, whenever they treated of the religion of this order, must have been equal to either their pride or their prejudice. It must have been so in this instance more especially; for a people who made it a fundamental maxim in their religion to conceal every part of it from strangers, whom they in their turn despised, would most of all draw a close curtain over this rite if they had practised it. But
left

* Vid. Lewis Hist. Brit. c. 2. et auct. ab eo citat.
Vit. Agric. c. 11. ad fin.

† Vid. Tac. in

left we should seem to build too much on the partiality of these writers, we must observe, that a particular custom, which prevailed among the Celts in punishing their criminals, may very naturally be supposed to have given rise to this barbarous account of the Druids. This custom will fall under our observation more properly a little lower, when we come to treat of this order in their legislative capacity. In the mean time, we shall only remark, that the charge in question tallies ill with some other particulars recorded of them by the same historians. That they, for instance, who had such worthy notions of the Supreme Being as to think that no image, but the sun, could give a shadow of him, and that no temple, but that which himself had built, was fit to serve him in, should, notwithstanding this, think to pacify him with the murder of their fellow-beings, seems a little incongruous. That philosophers, so remarkable for their wisdom and knowledge as to induce strangers to come to them from other countries, and spend twenty years under their tuition, should be thus barbarous in their manners, is equally improbable *. That religion should be thus savage among nations whose morality, they tell us, was so pure, that it excelled the best laws prescribed in other countries, is no less unlikely †. A picture, of which the different parts are so dissimilar, was certainly intended, not to express a true likeness of the original, but to expose and ridicule it.

FROM all that can be traced of the sacrifices of the Druids in the remains of their customs and language in these countries, there is great reason to think, that, so far from being human, they were

E 2

fel-

* Tacit. Germ. c. 9. cum c. 40. ad fin. &c. Dio. Sicul. ap. Camb. Brit. p. 37.
Plut. ap. Euseb. prep. l. 5. c. 27. de insul. adjac. Brit. &c. † Cæf. l. 6.
cum Tac. Germ. c. 19. ad fin. &c.

feldom even of the animal kind. I know not the least hint, in the Galic language, customs, or traditions, that alludes to animal sacrifices. This silence, with regard to these, is the more remarkable, as not only the distant allusions, but even the practice, of some of their other sacrifices, have still some existence in several parts of North Britain. These consist of a libation of flour, milk, eggs, and some few herbs and simples †. From this arises a presumption that in these countries, at least, the general cast of the Druidical sacrifices were of this nature; and the reason, probably, why the Britons held the hen and the goose sacred *, was, that they might always be supplied with that part of the materials which, at some seasons, was most likely to be scarce. What seems to be a kind of proof that these were the sacrifices which the Druids generally offered is, that the very name of sacrifice in Galic is composed of two words which signify *the offering of the cake* ‡. When at any time they were of a different kind, the boar §, and such other animals as were hurtful to mankind, seem to have been made choice of. To make it a part of their religion to kill these, was not unworthy of the wisdom of the Druids.

We have already seen what articles of faith were taught by this order. The same simplicity seems to have run through the doctrines which they inculcated on men as the rule of their practice. *To reverence the Deity, abstain from evil, and behave valiantly,*

† These might originally be the *felago* and *verbena*, which Pliny says were held sacred by the Druids; 4. 11. & 25. 9. The *Samol*, which Mr Whitaker supposes to be the *seamrog*, might also be in the number. 1. 16.

* Cæf. I. 5.

‡ *Lob'airt*; from *iob* or *uib*, "a raw cake or lump of dough," and *thoirt*, "to offer," the *th* quiescent.

§ Macrobian. Saturnal. 1. 6. c. 9. Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. 1. 16. c. 6.

liantly, were, according to Laërtius †, the three grand articles enjoined by the Druids. The first was a summary of their religious, the second of their civil, and the third of their martial law. The same author tells us, that the moral discourses of these philosophers were rather short and sententious, than long and laboured harangues. As the Galic language abounds with a vast number of pithy and proverbial sentences, answering this character, and as pregnant with good sense as any that are to be found in any language, it is probable we are indebted for the most part of them to the Druids. What seems to confirm this opinion, is, that these noble maxims of prudence and morality are generally ascribed to the *Sean'ar*, or *man of old times* *; by which is commonly meant something that relates to the æra of Druidism, in contradistinction to that of Christianity. These apophthegms would be delivered rather with the authority of lawgivers, than with the persuasion of orators or preachers. The strongest arguments to enforce them, would be the sanction of rewards and punishments, of which the Druids (who kept annual reckonings) had always the distribution in this world; and, as we shall see in the sequel, they were firmly believed to have no less in their power in the other. Nor is it unlikely that some experiment in natural philosophy, in which the Druids were great adepts, would on these occasions be called in to their aid; which would not fail to procure the strictest observance to every syllable that would drop from such a favourite of heaven as could work such a miracle.

MOST of the religious services of the Druids were probably begun

† In Proœm. § 6.

* *Mur thu'irt an Sean'ar*, "As the secondary preface to a great many of the *Gannar*, or man of old times, said," is the or-
lic proverbs.

gun and ended with the ceremony of going thrice † round the circle, carn, or altar, at which they were performed. As these circumvolutions began at the east-point, and followed the course of the sun, southward, they were called *deas-iul*, or *the way of the south* ‡. Performed in this direction, they implied the earnest desire of the worshippers, that every thing might prosper and go well with them. They likewise implied the readiness of every person who performed the ceremony to follow the will of God, in the same manner as they did the sun, which was considered as his image. On the contrary, the *car-tua'iul*, or going round the circle *northward*, was held disastrous, even to a proverb; and the Druid could not pronounce on any person a greater imprecation.

THE ceremony of *deas'iul* is still used on many occasions in the Highlands of Scotland. Women with child go thrice, in this direction, round some chapels, to procure an easy delivery. Sick persons do the same, round some *carns*, to charm back health. Out of certain wells, water is taken up in the name of any person whose recovery is doubtful; and his fate is prognosticated from the turn that the water takes in the cup, when lifted. The issue seldom failed of gaining the well additional credit; for the hopes or fears of the patient, with the care or neglect of his attendants, were generally sufficient to verify the prediction, by which they were always influenced. This was more especially the case when the water had taken the *tua'l* turn, as the fears of men are generally
more

† *Three* was a sacred number with most ancient nations. See Ovid. 7. 189. Virg. ecl. 8. 73.—Aristotle and Plutarch say it was held mysterious, as it comprehended the beginning, middle, and end.

‡ From *deas* "the south," and *iul* "way." How ancient this practice was, we may judge from a quotation in Athenæus, from Possidonium, a much older writer, l. 4. p. 154.

more prepollent than their hopes, when their fate hangs in a doubtful scale.—The phrase is still more used in conversation, than the ceremony is in practice. If the milk or meat which he swallows come but a little against the breath of a child, his nurse is immediately alarmed lest it may go *tua'l*, and pronounces the word *deas-iul* to give it the right direction. On numberless other occasions this word is used in the same manner.

BEFORE we lose sight of the Druids in their sacerdotal capacity, we may remark that they were sometimes consulted with regard to futurity †. Hence they had the name of *Faidbe' **, or “Prophets.” As they grasped at every thing that rendered the people more dependent on them, or that brought any accession of power to their order, we need not wonder to see them lay hold of this engine, which had so great an influence over the mind, and which they would manage with their usual address and cunning. Their intimate acquaintance with the state of affairs, arising from their own observation, and, no doubt, from secret intelligence; their knowledge of human nature, and of the springs of human actions; joined to their acquaintance with history, and long experience, might enable them to form a shrewd conjecture of any matter with regard to which they were consulted. Accordingly, we are told that their predictions were founded on such conjectures, as much as on any rules of augury ‡. These, as practised by the Greek and Roman priests, were too mean a quarry for the Druids to stoop to, at least in the time of their prosperity and power. With regard,

† Ossian in Comala: “Why didst thou Vid. P. Mela, 3. 1.

not tell me he would fall, &c.”—See also Cathlava; “What seest thou, &c.”

* Hence came the *Vates* of the Latins.

‡ Cicer. de Divinat. l. 1. c. 48.

regard, however, to their merit on this head, no precise judgment can be formed, as history furnishes but a very few instances of their predictions †. Only we may observe, that the Druids of this country seem to have established their character pretty well in this respect, before they could give rise to the notion of *the second sight*, the belief of which prevailed for so long a time in the Highlands. But upon the whole, the rule of *Euripides* might be applied to them, as well as to all other such pretenders to the art: "The best guesser is always the best prophet."

C H A P. III.

Of the DRUIDS considered as Magistrates; with some account of their Laws and Judicial Procedure.

THE second light in which we proposed to view the Druids was that of magistrates, or of lawgivers and judges. For though they did at times delegate a part of this authority on others, who had sometimes the name of Magistrates, and sometimes the title of Kings*; yet this seems to have been done, only to avoid too much fatigue in some cases, and too much odium in others. The Druids firmly held the real, whoever was invested with the nominal authority. Every cause of importance came before them, and

† We find the Druids or Druidesses consulted by the emperors Severus and Aurelian; the latter of whom was informed by them, that his family would one day

give place to that of Claudius. And Dio-clesian, when only a private soldier, was told that he should one day be emperor.

* Cæf. l. 7. Chrysof. Orat. 49.

and there lay no appeal from their decision. If any person whatever did not acquiesce in it, he drew, by that means, on himself the sentence of excommunication; which, in the shape it bore among them, was justly held more terrible than any death †. It seldom failed to crush the wretch on whom it fell. Shut out from all intercourse with society, denied every office of humanity, and execrated and shunned as a contagion or plague, he was glad to seek that shelter in death, which in life he could nowhere find. Nay, even in that last refuge of the miserable, it was firmly believed such persons could find no sanctuary. The sentence of the Druids, if not repealed, was supposed to pursue them to the other world, where it was to take place again, with many additional circumstances of terror.—Such was the anathema of the Druids; which, to preserve its awe, we may suppose, would be executed but seldom. Indeed their authority was so absolute, that there would be little occasion for it. Nobody would be so daring as to contest with them, nor so refractory as to refuse their dictates the most implicit obedience.

Of the laws of the Celts or Druids no very particular account can be given, for no code of theirs is come down to our times. Like their religion, they held them too sacred to be committed to writing; and tradition has not done them that justice, which a few remains of them shew they deserved. Their laws respecting strangers, and the rules of hospitality, which discover a greatness of mind, and a spirit of humanity, superior perhaps to all other nations of antiquity, may be taken as instances.—To all strangers every house was to be open, and every table free *. They were

F further

† Cæf. l. 6. c. 13.

* Tac. Germ. c. 1. Cæf. l. 6. &c.

further to inquire, at their departure, what things they stood in need of, or wherein their host might serve them †. Whoever failed in any of these points was not only abhorred by all his acquaintance, but fined or punished severely by the magistrate. Thus, among the *Burgundians*, long after the Celtic constitution had been shaken, and the fortunes of that people declining, we find it enacted, that any person convicted of any failure in hospitality should be fined in three crowns; and in double that sum, if he should direct a stranger to the house of a Roman. If any person offered an injury or even a slight to a stranger, the Celtic laws directed to punish him on the spot ‡. They also punished the murder of a stranger with death; whilst a number of cattle under the name of *eric* or ransom, or at the most banishment, generally atoned for the killing of one of their own nation §. Nay, so sacred were the laws of hospitality held by them, that in case of any extremity, a man was to risk his own life in the defence of a stranger who had trusted himself to his protection *. They carried their delicacy in this respect

† Dio. Sicul. l. 5. Tac. ubi supra. Ofsian, passim.

‡ Aristot. Mir. &c. apud Stob. Serm. 165.—*Mortalium omnium erga hospites humanissimi.* Procop. de *Ædif.* l. 3.

§ The *eric*, or ransom of any person, was ascertained by his quality or birth. In the Scottish laws of *Regiam Majestatem*, we find that one hundred and forty cows was the *eric* of an earl; one hundred, that of an earl's son, or thane; and sixteen, of a *villain*, or plebeian. Reg. Majest. l. 4. 24.—The words *cro* and *galmes* in the code are Galic (*crobb* and *geal-meat*), and signify *cows* and *estimate*.

Tacitus tells us, that the same custom prevailed among the ancient Germans. “*Luitur homicidium certo armentorum ac pecorum numero; pars civitati, pars propinquis.*”

* Of this the Gepidæ, descendants of the ancient Celts, afford us a remarkable instance. The emperor Justinian, and the king of the Lombards, after they had concluded a peace with both, demanded of them a noble refugee who had fled to them for sanctuary. Upon this, a council of the Gepidæ was called; who unanimously declared, that it were better their whole nation, man, woman, and child, should perish.

respect so far, that for fear of awakening the remembrance of any old feuds that might have subsisted between the families of the entertainer and his guest, they were forbidden to ask either the name or country of the latter, till it was done, in exchanging some token of friendship with him, at his departure *. The traces of these customs, tho' now somewhat faint, were strongly marked, not very far back, in all the Highlands of Scotland.

THESE Celtic laws and customs give a credibility to several passages in Ossian, which many have considered as no more than extravagant flights of the poet; such as the constant custom of inviting the enemy to the feast, "before they lift the spear," with other instances of the like generosity. The Celts are indeed sometimes charged with cruelty to their enemies; but if we consider two maxims, or laws, which seem to have always regulated their conduct, at least in this country, we may be inclined to give it rather the appellation of bravery. In the first place, they never fought till their offers of peace had been refused; and in the next, they ne-

F 2

ver

perish, than such a sacrilegious request should be complied with. Procop. Hist. Goth. l. 3. c. 35. l. 4. c. 27.

* If the entertainer was opulent, and that the guest chose to remain with him so long, the expiration of a year and a day, and no less, gave a title to ask these questions. Incredible as this custom may now appear, it was not long ago observed to the utmost in many families in the Highlands. *Donacha rua na fèile*, a Campbell of Glenlyon, brought it down in his family almost to the memory of some who are yet alive. The story of an Irish

bard who made the experiment, is well known. After staying the year and day, he asked of his host (who had gone to conduct him so far on the way, and get his name) the gift of his horse and plaid. It was here as among the old Germans: "Abeunti, si quid poposceris, concedere moris." Both were cheerfully given him. The bard acknowledged the favour by a few verses, in which he told this father of hospitality, that

"None but himself could be his parallel."

If the spirit which inspired the ancient bards had not then been dead, this second Cathmor could never die.

Of

ver engaged their enemies, even when thus compelled, with a superiority of numbers *. Thus they were often under the necessity, either of killing, or of being killed, as the custom of giving and receiving quarter was not, of old, so common as probably our Celts could have wished it.

A PEOPLE whose laws had so friendly an aspect upon strangers and enemies, may be supposed to have taken no less precaution to maintain good order among themselves †. But instead of tracing out any of these, which, like the tenets of their religion, would be found extremely simple and few, it may suffice to observe, that the three grand articles formerly mentioned, namely, the reverencing the Deity, abstaining from all evil, and behaving valiantly, were probably the sum of the Druidical law, as well as doctrine. Under one or other of these was comprehended every thing that related to religion, polity, or war; and it was no burden to any person's memory to keep them all in remembrance.

As

* Of these rules, frequent instances occur in Ossian's poems. See *Battle of Lora*, and the Poem of *Manes*, in the following Collection. But a more incontestible evidence of these maxims being attended to, is, that they have passed into two proverbs still well known in the Gaelic. The first, importing That the strong should always be merciful, is *Cha d'thug Fionn riabb blar gun chumba*. And the second, implying That even enemies should have justice, is *Cothram*, or *Combrag na Feine*. This is generally translated, in Ossian, *the equal combat*, or *the combat of heroes*.

† As Justice is the first cardinal virtue, and the basis of all society, not only

the laws, but also the religion, of the Druids, paid the most particular regard to it. Thus they taught, that if any neglected to pay their debts, and fulfil all their engagements and promises, in this world, they would be craved and pursued on that score, in the next, where it might not be so easy for them to clear it; and, accordingly, the accounts or writs, when there were any, were burnt or buried with the creditor. Pomp. Mela, de Sit. Orb. l. 5.

This doctrine or custom had no unfriendly aspect to society. It enlivened their faith in a future state; and encouraged the rich to lend to the poor, in hopes of being paid where they, in their turn, might be in need.

As it was the province of the Druids to enact, explain, and enforce, so it was also their business to take cognizance of the breach or neglect of these laws, and to judge both of the crime and of its punishment. In this, as in every other case, their power appears exorbitant; though they may have probably exerted it with the strictest justice and lenity †.

WHEN at any time a severity in punishing became necessary, the Druids, with wonderful address, turned over the blame, either upon the magistrate, who had little more in his power than the odious task of delating the delinquent and being his accuser; or upon heaven itself, which was pretended, and, from the artifice used, believed to direct their judgment, and give a sanction to their decision. Hence, their sentence, from the simple name *breith*, or “judgment,” came to be called *breith-neimbe*, “the judgment of heaven *;” which, with little or no variation, is still the term in the Galic language to express the decision of any court, and even the last judgment ‡.

ONE of the *holy frauds*, and perhaps the chief, made use of on these occasions, was the *gabba-bheil*, “the jeopardy or trial of Beil,” practised in dubious or dangerous cases. Of this it may be proper to give some account.

WE have already observed, that the Druids held annual assizes in the most central parts of every country, to decide all difficult controversies, whether of a public or private nature, to hear every appeal from inferior courts, and receive any charge that might be brought from the censors or magistrates. On these occasions, as the name and the remains of the custom still shew, it was customary

† Druidæ justissimi, &c. Strab. l. 4.

‡ *Breithneas*.

* Toland's Miscel.

mary to kindle a large fire, called *Samb'in*, or *the fire of peace*, on the consecrated hill or *carn* at which they met. When an easy and satisfactory decision could not otherwise be obtained, the trial of the panel's innocence was rested on his walking thrice, barefooted, through some large tract of the live ashes and coals of this holy fire *. If he escaped unhurt, heaven attested his innocence; if he did not, it was the *breith-neimbe*, or *judgment of heaven*, that he was guilty, and should be condemned. Previous to this, however, the Druids took all possible pains to investigate the truth, and, as they saw cause, determined beforehand what should be *the heavenly decision*, and the fate of the panel. They themselves are said to have been acquainted with a kind of oil, which allowed them to be pretty familiar with fire †, that all might be satisfied of their innocence. In the ceremony, which they always used, of bathing the feet of every person who was to pass through the fire, this antidote was administered, or not, according as it was thought he deserved. The spectators, who never supposed the bath to be any other than water, could not help being astonished when at any time they saw the miraculous deliverance; and if they should see it but in a few instances, would always be convinced of the infallibility of the judgment, whatever was the issue. We may suppose, however, that in order to preserve the credit of this miracle, it would be used but seldom, and more from necessity than from ostentation.

THIS *gabha-bbeil*, or "jeopardy of Be'il," is still the Galic word to denote any danger of the most dreadful kind. If any person has had a remarkable deliverance either from fire or water, he is said to

* Vid. Sil. Ital. *infra* citat.
& Plin. l. 7. c. 2.

† Vid. Serv. ex Varr. in *Æneid.* xi. 785.

to have come thro', or out of, *gabba-bheil*. From this custom came, probably, the ordeals by fire and water, which we read of in latter times. And it is not unlikely, that St Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, who might have seen this custom practised in some of those countries he travelled through, may allude to it when he speaks of some that shall be saved, *yet so as by fire* *. The meaning at least is precisely the same with what is affixed in Galic to *gabba-bheil*, which is The running such a dreadful hazard, that one's safety or escape from it is an astonishing miracle.

As the Celts were the first inhabitants of Italy, and the Druids its first priests, under the name of *Curetes*, they left there some traces behind them of this custom, to which we find some allusions in the Latin poets. On mount *Soraacte*, in the country of the *Sabines* †, *Be'il*, or, to speak in the Roman style, *Apollo*, had an *acervus* or *carn*, on which this ceremony for a long time continued to be performed; and the family of the *Hirpins*, who understood and practised the mystery, enjoyed all the immunities of our Druids, by decree of the Roman senate ‡. The following passages of Virgil §, put with great propriety in the mouth of *Aruns*, who was of this family, and another to the same purpose in *Silius Italicus* ¶, are

* 1 Cor. iii. 15.

† The Sabines were the descendants of the Umbrians, who were the most ancient people of Italy, and of the race of the Gauls or Celts.—Comp. Dion. Halicarn. Ant. Rom. l. 1.—Plin. iii. 14. Flor. i. 17. Solin. Polyhist. c. 8. &c.

‡ Plin. vii. 2.

§ Æn. xi. ubi supra.

¶ Tum Soraacte satum, præstantem corpore
et armis
Æquum noscens; patriocui ritus in arvo,
Dum pius Arcitenens incensâs gaudet AC-
CERVIS.

Extæ ter innocuos late portare per ignes:
Sic in Apollinea semper vestigia, prunâ
Inviolata teras; victorque vaporis, ad aras
Dona serenato seras solennia Phœbo.

Sil. Ital. v. 175.

are plain descriptions of the *gabba-bheil* or Druidical custom we are speaking of, which is the best commentary to explain them.

“ O patron of Soraſte’s high abodes,
 “ Phoebus, thou ruling pow’r among the gods!
 “ Whom firſt we ſerve; whole woods of unctuous pine
 “ Burn on thy heap, and to thy glory ſhine;
 “ By thee protected, with our naked ſoles
 “ Through flames unſing’d we paſs, and tread the kindled coals.
 “ Give me, propitious Pow’r, to waſh away
 “ The ſtains of this diſhonourable day.

DRYDEN.

THE trial being over, and the truth, as was ſuppoſed, ſufficiently expiſcated, ſuch criminals as were thought too infamous to live were immediately put to death; and the manner of their execution was, in all likelihood, what gave occaſion to ſuch as were neither well acquainted with the Druids, nor well affected to their order, to aſſert that they offered human ſacrifices. What gave this aſſertion a colour of probability was, that theſe wretches were put to death by the perſons who always preſided at ſacrifices; on the *carn* or altar conſecrated to their deity; and on the occaſion of celebrating one of his moſt ſolemn feſtivals. Although a ſtranger had been diſpoſed to relate the truth with the greateſt impartiality, every circumſtance here had a tendency to deceive him, and to make him ſuppoſe theſe devoted criminals were actually human ſacrifices. In one ſenſe, indeed, they were ſo; ſacrifices to the peace and order of ſociety, the maintaining of which was, as has been already obſerved, the very end and deſign of that feſtival. The Druids alſo, like good magiſtrates, zealous for ſuppreſſing vice and puniſhing the guilty, might with great propriety ſay, that the putting of a criminal

minal to death was a most acceptable sacrifice to the Deity, and a means of averting his displeasure *. From all this what could a stranger infer, but that the person was literally sacrificed? That a priest should be the executioner of justice, the punishing of a criminal a religious service, and attended with the same ceremony as the offering up of a victim, would be things too new to him to have any other idea. This account of the matter further corresponds with what Cæsar tells us, when he says that the Druids held criminals to be the most acceptable victims †; and we may venture to affirm, that when these were wanting, the innocent seldom or never supplied their room.

SOME further hints of this apology for the Druids may be gathered even from their accusers. Cæsar says these victims were burnt amidst branches of trees woven, or heaped together; which was the very death given to the criminals we speak of, who were thus consumed in the holy *pacific fire*, or *samb'in*, above mentioned. Here we find no mention of the knife, the altar, or the blood of the victim; on the shedding of which the chief stress was laid in most animal sacrifices. Instead of that, they were cast alive into the fire §. And Tacitus observes of the Germans ‡, who had the same customs and the same religion, that over such infamous criminals as we speak of a heap of every kind of rubbish was raised in token of the people's abhorrence. Now this was the constant usage of
 G the

* Hence the office of executioner is said to be still in high repute among the Germans. Anc. Un. Hist. *Of the Germ.*

† Cæf. l. 6. c. 16.

§ Ib. & Strab. l. 4.

‡ c. 12.—Cæsar says the Germans had no Druids; but Tacitus, who knew them

better, plainly means this order when he speaks of their priests. Probably they were then in a great measure suppressed, or forced to take shelter under some other name. Still, however, the bards in that country seem to have retained their name and office. Vid. c. 3. init.

the Druids after they had burnt the criminals in the manner we have described; and seems to prove plainly, that Cæsar and Tacitus speak of the same thing; the victims of the one being the malefactors of the other. To which we may add, that the latter restricts the offering of human sacrifices to certain days only, which we may suppose to have been the assizes we have spoken of; and also that the *carn*, or, as he would imagine it, the *Mercurial heap*, on which they were held, led him to think they had been offered to Mercury.

BUT we do not build so much upon these hints, as upon the much clearer evidence of several expressions still in use in the Galic or Celtic language, which shew that this was not a sacrifice, but only an execution of criminals; and that the heaps or mounts, so frequent in many places, were raised in this manner over them. To this day, the Galic term for an *outlaw*, or one whose life is forfeited to public justice on account of any crime, is *fean air charn*, “a man upon a carn;” and in speaking of such a person, *the e air charn*, “he is upon a carn.” These expressions have a manifest allusion to the Druidical custom of which we are speaking, and to the mode of judging and punishing criminals upon these *cairns* in the manner above described. After the execution of this sentence, the heap was increased by a new stratum of stones and rubbish, to which every one present contributed his share, both to shew his approbation of the judgment and his detestation of the crime*. This procedure is confirmed by the bones and ashes found (sometimes with, and sometimes without, stone-coffins) at different depths in the same *carn*, and

* See 2 Sam. xviii. 17. Josh. vii. 26, &c.—Lapidation was anciently a common mode of punishment.

and also in different quarters of it. We have likewise several expressions of the imprecatory kind which tend to elucidate this custom. '*Soil leam nach raibb do luath fui' charn*, and *B'fhear leam e bhi fui' charn cblach*, are forms of malediction that with one *under a heap of stones*, and one's *ashes under a cairn*; expressions that obviously allude to the Druidical procedure with regard to criminals. To this we may add, that the *Welsh* also call these heaps *Carn-vraduyr*, and *Carn-lbadron*, "thief and traitor's carns;" and that they have likewise an imprecation, *Kern ar dy ben*, to the same purpose with these just now mentioned. Here every thing alludes to the execution of criminals; nothing to the offering up of human sacrifices.

We must not, however, conceal, that there is in the Galic another proverb, very opposite in its meaning to these just now mentioned. It is *Cairi' mi clach ad' charn*, or "I will put a stone in thy carn;" intimating that this was an act of friendship*. But these opposite proverbs in the same language tend only to shew, that the same ceremony had, at different times, a different meaning. In the infancy of society, "before the light of the song arose," a carn was raised over the respected dead†, to keep his memory alive, and to preserve his ashes from insult. The heath or grass with which some of these heaps have been found overgrown, so that they have been discovered only by accident, shew them to be

G 2

of

* Whether any carn was designed as a mark of infamy or respect, it was customary with every passenger to contribute something to its augmentation. Hence the size of such carns as happened to be near any place of much resort came soon to be very enormous.---The Mercurial heaps in Greece were augmented in the

same manner by the contribution of passengers. Dydimus ad Odyss. 7.

† In very ancient times this *monumental load* was in like manner used as a mark of respect in the Eastern countries; for Andromache tells of her father, that

"They laid him decent on the funeral pile,"

"Then rais'd a mountain where his bones were laid." Il. 6.

of this earliest period, and far prior in time to others that have not this "moss of years" for their covering. The stones of some of them appear to have been carried from an immense distance; a tribute which nothing could exact, but that high respect and love which was due to the good and brave head of his people. Arrow-heads of flint which have been found in some of these, and which have been used when metal was scarce or not invented in these countries, prove them to be of the most remote antiquity. The horn of a deer, or some piece of armour, the symbol of the amusement or occupation of the deceased; a piece of glass, or some such trinket, placed there, perhaps to deck them in the other world; are generally found in the oldest kind of *carns*, which owed their origin to love and esteem.

IN process of time, however, when society was somewhat farther advanced, this custom of burning the body of the dead and raising such a monument over it was laid aside, as the circumstances which gave rise to it ceased to operate †. A simpler mode of burying, less shocking to humanity, was adopted; and the memory of persons and events was intrusted to tradition and to the song of the bard, as to a more distinct and permanent monument. The pain of burning soon suggested a severe mode of punishing criminals, and the *carn* was used as a beacon to caution others against the

† It was probably the dread of having their remains abused by barbarous enemies that induced men at first in any country to burn the dead. Thus, among the Romans, Sylla was the first of his family who ordered his body to be burnt, lest the barbarities he had committed on

that of Marius should be retaliated on his own. Cic. de leg. l. 2.

The Israelites, in like manner, departed from their common mode of interring, to burn Saul and his sons, to prevent their bodies being abused by the Philistines. Gen. xxiii. 4. with 1 Sam. xxxi. 12.

the like danger. In the *carns* of this æra, the symbols above-mentioned are wanting; and nothing but bones, ashes, and charcoal, is found in them; which seems to afford an internal proof for what purpose they were intended.

IN a still later period, the Danes, during their invasion, as they were in a hostile country, and much in the same situation with some of those tribes who first planted it, applied *carns* to their original use of preserving the memory of their chieftains, and securing their body or ashes from insult *. It is probable the custom of raising heaps over criminals had by this time been long in disuse, and that the proverb of *cuiridh mi clach ad charn*, or "I will put a stone in thy heap," was a phrase used by some of the dejected natives, when they would supplicate any favour from these merciless intruders. The expression soothed their pride, and fell in with the natural passion all men have for fame, which in this case was to be had in no other shape, as no British bard would prostitute his muse to praise an unjust invader.

BUT to return to what gave rise to this account of *carns*. The observations which have been made on those of the intermediate kind, and the proverbs which have been mentioned with regard to them and to the punishment of criminals, seem plainly to shew how the Druids came to be charged with sacrificing their species. Persons who could know but little of them, and who seem resolved to

* Towards the beginning of this period, which we may call the *interregnum* between Druidism and Christianity, these countries seem to have been in their greatest barbarism. The antipathy between the natives and their invaders seems to have been so inveterate, that their revenge

sometimes penetrated into the sanctuary of the grave itself. The expression of *Dhurichde' tu mo lud' le uisge*, "You could wish to see my ashes strewed on a stream," intimates that the horrid deed has been sometimes done.

† This.

to misrepresent and traduce them, had, in the circumstances above mentioned, a very plausible foundation for this charge. And even supposing them impartial, every circumstance had such a tendency to mislead them, that the path of truth could not easily be found. Add to this what has been said before with regard to the character of the Druids, who were famed for their wisdom and humanity, and the observations made on the general strain of their sacrifices, which appeared to have been more of the vegetable than of the animal kind; and it will amount to a high degree of evidence, that on this head they were *not guilty*. Even as a punishment on criminals, they would seldom put in practice the severe mode we have been speaking of; as they had so many other engines to work with, that this one, so unwieldy and dangerous, could rarely be needed.

The Druids neglected no means of increasing their own authority and keeping society in obedience and awe. Not satisfied, therefore, with exercising the judicial power, and distributing all rewards and punishments in this world, they pretended, and were firmly believed, to have an equal power of influencing mens happiness or misery in the next. This appears from some of their funeral customs, the traces of which are still remaining. Whenever any person died, a portion of earth and salt was immediately laid on the corpse †; the one the emblem of the corruptibility of the body, the other of the incorruptibility of the soul. A sacred court seem to have sat upon the deceased, in order to determine his character, from their own observation, and the testimony of his neighbours who had access, on all occasions, to be acquainted with him*.

† This ceremony is still practised by many who can give no reason for it.

him *. On the issue of this inquiry it depended what funeral honours should be paid to the dead. If his character was such as greatly distinguished him; or if he had been the author of any useful invention, or eminent in the practice of any art; it was recorded in the song, and some symbol of it placed in the tomb with his body; especially while the custom of raising *carns* continued in force. Hence (perhaps, as much as to serve them in the other world) arms, amber, glass, crystal, needles, and such things, have been found with the ashes and urns in these monuments.

With regard to the immortal part, the soul, this also must receive its sentence from the tribunal of the Druids. If the person had acted his part well in life, and acquitted himself honourably in the discharge of the three grand articles of their law, his spirit was pronounced happy, and the bard sung its *requiem* to the harp, which was supposed to give it a passport to *Fla'innis*, or Paradise. Hence, in the poems of Ossian, though the court had then ceased to sit, we find heroes so eager to obtain the funeral song. However well they had deserved of their country, their ghosts, till this was pronounced, were supposed to be excluded from the place of bliss, and to wander, pale and sad, on the mist of some marsh or fen. Not small, therefore, was the cause of that mournful complaint which we find their apparitions sometimes making to the bard when they "had not yet received their fame."

If, on the other hand, the issue of the inquiry was unfavourable to.

* The like custom prevailed among the ancient Egyptians.—Still the first thing which a Highlander commonly says, on the death of any person, is something by way of stricture on his character, and always favourable. One expression in particular is seldom omitted, in speaking of the dead; *A chuid do db'aras da! i. e.* "May he have his share of paradise!"

to the dead, and that he was found to have lived in the neglect or breach of any of the three grand laws of the Druids, his sentence was the reverse, and his lot was assigned him in the horrors of the dark and cold *Iurin*.

It may well be supposed, that the relations of the dead would be greatly affected with joy or sorrow, according to the respective determinations of this inquiry of the Druids. When the sentence was favourable, the greatest rejoicings instantly took place. When otherwise, the sorrow was equally great; and, in either case, they who would bear the chief part, and would be most affected, would be the nearest friends.

IN some of the Highlands of Scotland, and in some parts of Ireland, this custom has been very lately practised, and is hardly yet extinct. In the Highlands, the nearest relation is the first to lead, on these occasions, the dance and the song. These, however, have always been of a graver and more solemn kind than what have been used on their ordinary merry-meetings. From the air and style of some of these compositions, which are not unfrequent in the poems of Ossian, we may form some opinion of what they have been from their earliest æra. They seem to have been all admirably suited to those mournfully-pleasant emotions which that poet emphatically calls "the joy of grief."

IN the remains of this custom there is one remarkable circumstance which deserves our notice. Among the Caledonians, the ceremony was perpetually of the joyful kind, in all the parts of their country in which it has been known to be practised. Nothing can be a stronger argument, that the morals of the ancient inhabitants of these countries were, in general, of the most exalted kind. Instances

stances of vitious persons appear to have been so rare, that when the judges ceased to sit, the custom, from the general prevalency of the joyful part, and the paucity of instances to the contrary, assumed its colour entirely from the brighter side; and, though much against the natural current of the passions, made its way down to our times in the rejoicing channel.

THE inhabitants of Ireland, on the other hand, whose music had always a mournful elegiac cast, were naturally led to take the doleful side of the custom. Hence, in their funeral songs, the *Coronach*, *Ululath*, or lamentation, came to be the most common. The two different ceremonies, however, which the two nations have thus split between them, are but the two branches of the one old Druidical custom of judging the fate of the dead from their conduct while alive.

It is easy to conceive what a happy effect this practice must have had upon society. By keeping futurity constantly in view, with all its joys and terrors, an attention to conduct, and a desire to excel, would always be kept alive in every breast. The thought of having his fame and final state decided, in a great measure, by the testimony which his neighbours gave of a man's character, would be a constant check upon every inclination to harm, and a perpetual source of good and great actions. These were the only avenue to the fame of the song, and to the felicity of Paradise.

As to the conveyance of souls to their respective abodes after their sentence was passed, this was believed to have been performed by some appearances in nature, which the Druids made probably a shift, at times, to counterfeit. In general, however, it is most likely they waited till these appearances were produced by

H

na-

natural causes. Thunder, lightning, dark clouds, and the noxious vapours of some fenny lake, in which they must have waited for squally winds to drive them, formed the vehicle of condemned spirits. The more lovely and beneficent meteors, the rays of the sun and moon, the rainbow, and the like, were the medium of conveyance allotted for those who deserved better*.

A MORE distinguishing respect was pretended by the Druids to be shewn on this occasion to themselves, who always passed for peculiar favourites of heaven. A bright star was sent down on purpose to conduct their souls to paradise. To this day, the shooting of a star gliding lambent along the blue vault, is called in Galic *dreug*; and the vulgar no sooner see it, than they immediately expect to hear of the death of some great and good person. This notion must have originated from the source just now mentioned; the word *dreug* being only an abbreviation of *dru'cug*, which signifies "the death of a Druid."—The tradition of the fiery car, on which the good Enoch mounted up to heaven, which, with many other of their religious notions, the Druids might have carried with them in their migrations from the east, was perhaps the first thing that suggested these fancies. Once set on foot, they were easily kept up by the vulgar, ever fond of the marvellous, and always prone to superstition.

SOME have supposed the transmigration of souls to have been a tenet of the Druids, and delivered by them to Pythagoras, who first introduced it into the mythology of the Grecians†. But this opinion seems to be without foundation, and indeed has been generally

* Vid. Ossian passim. Plut. ap. Euseb. ubi sup. Rudbec. Olai. Atlant. &c.

† Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 6. Euseb. præp. x. 2.

rally exploded. It is quite inconsistent with the custom which we have been just now describing, and with the whole system of the Druidical religion; which could never have that influence it had upon the heart, if men had any suspicions of passing into vegetables or animals when they died. Pythagoras found this strange notion in India; and his servant Zamolxis might perhaps import it to Thracia*, his native country, and some other places: but, among the Druids, the belief of it never prevailed.

As it was, however, one of their tenets, that the world underwent a renovation at certain periods by fire and water alternately†, it is not improbable that they might indulge the wretched, on these occasions, a chance of entering into new bodies, in which they might possibly have it in their power to make amends for their former misconduct. In the Galic language, there is nothing that alludes to transmigration, unless it be meant of these periods of general transmutation, when almost every thing was supposed to undergo a new form. There is nothing more common still, than to hear it asserted of the most unlikely things, that they shall not happen till the *brath*, or the *dilinn*; that is, till “the conflagration or the deluge;” which may possibly imply, that even such improbable things might then take place.

THE word *brath*, which originally signified “the conflagration,” came by degrees, after the introduction of Christianity, to denote the general judgment which is to accompany that event. The idea which is now annexed to the common expression of *gu brath*, or *gu la bbrath*, is “never,” or “till the day of judgment.” But the compounds of the word plainly shew, that its original meaning

H 2

was

* Mela, l. 2. Solin. 10.

† Strab. l. 4.

was “a conflagration,” or “burning.” Thus, one in the heat or flame of a passion, is said to be *air a bbre’as* (or *bhra’theas*), a metaphor taken from the last conflagration, and signifying literally a heat similar to that terrible phenomenon.

THE other expression of *gu dilinn*, or *gu tig an dilinn*, that is, “till the deluge,” is also common in the Galic, and manifestly derived from this tenet of the Druids. It is curious enough to hear such a period constantly referred to by a people who no longer believe it shall ever come. It is generally applied to cases more improbable and more distant than the occasions on which the other word is used; which shews, that the Druids looked for the first revolution to happen by fire. As they could not but have a tradition of the deluge of Noah, it is not unlikely they might also hear something of Enoch’s prophecy; and that from both these circumstances, they were led to think, there might be a periodical succession of such revolutions.

C H A P. IV.

Of the PHILOSOPHY of the DRUIDS.

WE proceed next to consider the Druids under the character of natural philosophers. This was the capacity in which they most shone. Their knowledge of nature seems indeed to have been inferior to that of no philosophers of any age or country whatever. It were indeed surprising if it should, considering the
many

many and peculiar advantages which they enjoyed. As they were, from time immemorial, a standing order of philosophers, they had always the experiments of a long series of ages to begin with. These were so carefully preserved by the uninterrupted succession of Druids, that none of them, of any consequence, could possibly be lost. None but men of genius were admitted to the order; and then, as we have seen above, their application was great, and their whole lifetime devoted to study. Their custom of living together in societies or colleges, was also of great service to them in the prosecution of their inquiries, as they could by that means assist one another with greatest advantage; like lamps that give a stronger light when all their rays are united and interchanged. We may likewise observe, that their religion and language was so extensively diffused, that all the experiments and discoveries made in so vast a tract of the globe as the Celtic nation possessed, flowed in to enrich the knowledge of this order, and conveyed, like so many streams to the ocean, large supplies to it from all quarters. Nor should we omit, with regard to the Druids of Britain in particular, that their early commerce with the Phœnicians might procure them opportunities of learning all the sciences in which that and some other eastern nations are said to have been so eminent. It is not unlikely, that it was this accession of foreign knowledge that rendered the Druids of Britain so famous; though it may be difficult to give any reason why they might not themselves make as great a progress as any other philosophers, when their order was so early established, formed upon so wise and extensive a plan, and placed upon so independent a footing. But however they came by it, a vast acquaintance with the powers of nature we are sure
they

they were possessed of. It was from this knowledge, as has been observed above, that they had the name of *Druidbe'*, or "Druids;" which is still the only term in the language for natural philosophers or magicians, as *druidbeachd*, or "druidism," is that for natural philosophy or magic. Some particulars relative to this capacity of the Druids, we shall now endeavour to investigate, both from the remains of their language, and from ancient authorities.

THAT the world was created by the Divine wisdom and power, was a primary tenet of the Druids. This, like the Phœnicians and Egyptians, they represented by the emblematical figure of an egg coming out of the mouth of a serpent *. It was this that gave rise to the fable of the serpent's egg recorded by Pliny †, and to the no less absurd traditions which we still meet with, concerning the *clack naithir*, or *glain' nan Druidb'*, which was the crystal ball said above to have been worn by the Druids. The vulgar, understanding no more of this mystery than strangers, ascribed to that amulet all the miracles of a Talisman in the *Arabian Night's Entertainments*; and thought it was owing to some secret charm or virtue which it was possessed of, that the Druid performed all his works of wonder. A few of these crystals are still to be seen in the Highlands, where they have not yet lost all their credit. Some of their owners have still the weakness to believe, or the dissingenuity to pretend, that these trinkets can do almost every thing but raise the dead. If a distemper rages among men or beasts, it is no uncommon thing to send fifty miles for this glass-physician to cure them. In general, however, men have acquired strength enough to overcome these ridiculous superstitions. The vassal no longer gives im-

plicit

* Relig. des Gaul. l. 1. c. 26. & 3. ult.

† l. 29. c. 3.

plicit faith to his chieftain, though the latter is still willing to confer the greatest obligations when this can be done so very cheaply.

WITH the origin, the Druids taught also the figure and magnitude, of the earth * ; but with what exactness there is no account left by which we can determine. To geography, we cannot suppose they could be strangers. If they had lost the accounts of their original migration from the East, yet the commerce which subsisted so early between Britain and very remote nations would give our Druids an opportunity of knowing the situation of most of the countries at that time known.

ASTRONOMY has been likewise studied by this order ; and in the many long and hazardous voyages, which men performed in those days, without any chart or compass but the stars to guide them, we have some proof of their success in it. The common name for a star continues still be *reül*, (or *ruith-iul*) "the guide to direct the course." But it is not only the motion and magnitude of the heavenly bodies that the Druids are said to have been acquainted with †. They seem to have taken a still closer view of them, and to have been no strangers even to the use of telescopes. It must have been by this invention that the Boreadæ (by whom *Hecateus* ‡ means the Bards or Druids) of a certain Hyperborean island, little less than Sicily, and over-against Celtiberia, a description which exactly answers to Britain, could bring the moon very near them, and shew its opacity, with the mountains, rocks, and other appearances upon its surface. The manufacture of glass, with which the pieces of glass and crystal found in

carns

* Cæf. l. 6. c. 14.
Sicul. l. 3. c. 11.

† Cæf. ib.

‡ Apud Diod.

carns * prove them to have been acquainted, probably led them to these discoveries. As glass is said to have been originally an invention of the Phoenicians, and a staple commodity of the city of Sidon †, it is possible the British Druids might, in the course of their dealings, learn from them the art of making, and applying it to practical and philosophical uses. Nay, perhaps, it were more natural to suppose, that our contemplative philosophers were themselves the lenders, rather than the borrowers of this invention. The process of vitrifying even the walls of their houses, of which several remains are still to be seen ‡, shews that they early practised the art in gross; and it is but reasonable to suppose they would by degrees refine and improve it. The very word *glaoine*, the Galic name for glass, being of Celtic, and not of foreign extract, seems to prove the art to have been their own. The etymology of the word seems to be *geala*, or *glao' theine*, that is, "glued or brightened by fire." As no people have technical terms, in their own language, for any arts to the practice of which they were strangers, we may infer, that all the arts, for which we have names that are of Celtic derivation, have been practised by our ancestors. This remark might lead us to a very curious investigation of the arts and sciences of the ancient Caledonians, if it did not carry us too far out of our way at present.

In speaking of the astronomical knowledge of the Druids, we may observe, that they were acquainted with the *cycle of the sun and moon*, the last of which is probably alluded to in the nineteen years
con-

* They were probably placed there in honour of those who invented or practised the art; to whose memory, we may suppose the *carns* was also raised.

† Bochart. Phaleg. l. 3. c. 35. col. 303. & Strab. l. 16.

‡ See Williams on vitrified ruins in the Highlands.

converse of Apollo, which Hecateus speaks of*. A Druidical temple in the island of Lewis, one of the Hebrides, bore evident marks of their skill in astronomy. Every stone in this temple, according to Toland †, was placed astronomically. The circle consisted of twelve equidistant obelisks, denoting the twelve signs of the zodiac. The four cardinal points of the compass were marked by lines of obelisks running out from the circle, and each point subdivided into four more. The range of obelisks from the north, and exactly facing the south, was double; being two parallel rows, each consisting of nineteen stones. A large stone in the centre of the circle, thirteen feet high, and of the perfect shape of a ship's rudder, seems to be a kind of symbol that this astronomical knowledge was designed to be subservient to navigation. This perhaps may have been the *winged temple* which *Eratosthenes* § says Apollo had among the Hyperboreans; the name which the first sailors gave to all who lay to the north of the pillars of Hercules, or straits of Gibraltar. Others suppose that famous temple to have been in the isle of Sky, which from that circumstance may have got the name of the *winged isle*, or *Eilean Sciathbanach*.

THAT the Druids were acquainted with the use of letters, admits of no manner of doubt ‡. However strong or well exercised their memory may have been, without some kind of writing to assist and refresh it, they could hardly retain such a variety of copious and important subjects as they treated of. These writings, as well as their other mysteries, they seem to have concealed for many ages

I

from

* Ubi supra, ap. Dio. Sicul.

† Miscel. v. 1. p. 89.

§ In Opuscul. Mythol. &c. cit. apud Toland.

‡ Cæf. 6. 14. & Rel. des Gaul. p. 39:
—Their very law of not committing
their religion to writing, is a proof that
writing was in use among them.

from the people; who probably knew nothing of them either in this country or in Gaul, till they were introduced there by the Phocæan colony, about 500 years before the Christian æra †. Even after the invention was known, the most of the Celtic tribes held the study of letters in the greatest contempt *, as they thought it tended to enervate the body, and unfit it for those martial exercises in which they placed the greatest glory. The Druids would do all in their power to strengthen this aversion, as they found their advantage in the ignorance of the vulgar. Accordingly, to the very last, they never suffered them to commit to writing any part of their history, laws, or religion †. The chief reason which they gave for this was, to prevent their falling into the hands of strangers; but another no less real was, to keep the people ignorant, and more dependent. Cæsar tells us, the characters used by the Druids were the Greek; if the word *Græcis*, as some learned men are of opinion, be not an interpolation ‡. The Greek, it is possible, they might be acquainted with, as it might assist them in their intercourse with some nations who used it. The Turdetani, who are reckoned by many the most ancient people of Spain §, and who were certainly of the Celtic stock, are said by Strabo ¶ to have laws written in verse some thousand years before his time. This exaggerated account of them proves at least that their learning was of very great antiquity. And we may infer, that if the Druids of Celtiberia were thus early acquainted with the use of letters, those of Britain and Gaul could not be much behind them.

That

† Just. l. 43. c. 3.

* Ælian. var. hist. l. 8. c. 6.

† Cæf. 6. 14.

Strab. l. 4.

‡ Jos. Scalig. l. 1. epist. 16. & Hottoman Franco-Gall. c. 2.

§ Voss. chron. Teraph. de reg. Hisp.

¶ l. 3.

That our Druids were possessed of letters from a very remote antiquity, seems very evident from our Galic or Irish alphabet; the simplicity of which, and the paucity of its letters, prove it to be exceeding old. This alphabet consists exactly of the sixteen letters which Cadmus brought from Phœnicia about 1400 years before the birth of our Saviour, with only the addition of the letter F, and the aspirate which was expressed with only a dot above the line. Now, if this alphabet had not been borrowed at least before the time of the Trojan war, when Palamedes made the first addition to it, we can hardly conceive it should be so simple. Or if the Druids should cull it, it would be remarkable that they should hit precisely on the letters of Cadmus, and reject none but the later additions. To this we may add, that they could much easier spare one of Cadmus's letters, than some of those which have been afterwards joined to it. The Greek α , for example, expresses a sound so common in the Galic, and so imperfectly expressed by the combined powers of c (or k) and h , that they could not possibly omit it, if it had been in the alphabet when they had adopted the rest of their letters. So far would they be from leaving it out, that it is rather a wonder they never thought of inventing such a letter, to avoid the necessity of making perpetual substitutions for it. These reasons speak the alphabet under consideration to be so old, that we may suppose it co-eval with that of Cadmus. The trade which Britain carried on with Phœnicia, perhaps as far back as that period *, makes it probable that our Druids, instead of taking their

* Sammes Brit. p. 47. Herodot. l. 3. c. 15.

alphabet even from that of Cadmus, had drawn it from the same fountain ‡.

WHETHER

‡ The learned by Dr Johnson supposes the Caledonians to have been always a rude and illiterate people, who had never any written language. But this assertion is manifestly without foundation; for we can still produce a number of old MSS. in the Galic language. When the Druids, who spoke this tongue, and were by no means unlearned, had been driven from the rest of Britain, those of Caledonia took up their residence in Iona, one of the Hebrides, where they had a college, and lived and taught unmolested, till they were dispossessed by St Columba in the sixth century. For several ages after that period, Iona was one of the most famous seats of learning which this or any of the neighbouring kingdoms could boast of; and the language in which almost all this learning was retailed, and written, was the Galic. The difference between this and the Irish, which the Doctor and some others lay so much stress upon, is of no very ancient date. The language of Columba, who had his education in the Irish schools, appears, from what remains of his composition, to have been pure Galic; and the elegy of his bard over the famous Irish champion Murcha Macbrian, of an older date, is no less so. From this identity of the language during so many ages, and from the constant intercourse between the two countries, it may be inferred, that any cultivation which the language received was common to both kingdoms.

To these observations I add a few facts to prove that we had for a long time back a written language. In the island of Mull, in the neighbourhood of Iona, there has been from time immemorial, till of very late, a succession of *Ollas*, or "graduate doctors," in a family of the name of M'Lean, whose writings, to the amount of a large chestful, were all wrote in Galic. What remained of this treasure was, not many years ago, bought up as a literary curiosity at the desire of the duke of Chandos, and is said to have perished in the wreck of that nobleman's fortune. Lord Kaimes (Sketches, B. 1.) mentions a Galic MS. of the first four books of Fingal, which the translator of Ossian found in the isle of Sky, of as old a date as the year 1403. Just now I have in my possession a mutilated treatise of physic, and another of anatomy, with part of a calendar, belonging probably to some ancient monastery, all in this language and character. These pieces, when compared with others of a later date, appear to be several centuries old. I had the use of another equally ancient from captain M'Lauchlan of the 55th regiment. It consisted of some poems and a theological discourse. From these observations and facts, it clearly appears, that ever since the time of the Druids, the Galic has been always a written language.

If this note had not already swelled so much, we might offer several arguments to shew, that, in all probability, the Galic

WHETHER the Druids were acquainted with the Greek language, is a question which some have affirmed, and others denied. Those of Gaul might know little of it till the Massilian colony had introduced it to the country, and taught the better sort to write their bargains and contracts in it †. Had it been much in vogue in the times of Cæsar, he had not needed an interpreter to converse with Divitiacus; nor would he, for the sake of secrecy, write his letter in that language to Cicero ‡. As the Druids of Britain, however, were more learned, and as the nation were in commerce with the Greeks long before the time of Cæsar, they might be under a necessity of forming some acquaintance with their language, and might use it in their accounts and contracts, though they held their religion and laws too sacred to be trusted to it §. From what is related of the philosopher Abaris, who seems to have been a British if not a Hebridian Druid *, we may infer that at least some of the order had turned their attention pretty early to the study of the Greek language. From the account left us of this person by the orator Himerius, he seems to have spoken it with the greatest ease and elegance; as it was necessary he should, since he appears to have been an ambassador on some business of importance. “ From his speech one would have thought Abaris had come out of the

lic alphabet as well as language is the same that was used by the ancient Celts; and therefore the most likely to have been the parent of the Gothic or Saxon letter, which bears a strong resemblance to it: only the latter has adopted the full complement of the Roman alphabet, while the Galic is still satisfied with almost only the original Phœnician letters.

† Strab. l. 4. ‡ Cæf. l. 1. 19. c. & 5. 12.

§ Cæf. 6. 14.

* Hecat. ap. Dio. Sicul. 3. 11.—Toland (Miscel. p. 160. &c.) offers several arguments to prove Abaris a Druid of Bel's or Apollo's great temple in the Hebrides, abovementioned.—Perhaps his name of Abaris, or *Abarich*, might be an appellation from a country in that neighbourhood.

† Hi-

the *Academy* or very *Lycaum*. Abaris was affable in conversation; expeditious and secret in dispatching affairs of importance. He was studious of wisdom, and fond of friendship; at the same time cautious and circumspect; trusting little to fortune, as became one on whose prudence so much was relied †." In short, in every qualification and virtuous accomplishment, none could excel Abaris. Hence Pythagoras's fondness for him, and readiness to initiate him into all his mysteries. The Druid (for it is plain this philosopher was one, not only from his learning, but from the circumstance of his dress reaching to his heels, whereas it came scarce to the knees of others) might requite the Samian with perhaps as valuable knowledge as he could receive from him ‡. For if we may judge of Abaris from the few hints recorded of him, to no philosopher does he seem to have been inferior. But to return from this digression, if it can be called such, concerning the literature of our Druids, we make some more remarks on their proficiency in natural philosophy.

FROM the observations formerly made on the size of their *Grom-leachs* and obelisks, it appears they were no strangers to the mechanic powers. The size of their *judgment* or *rocking* stones makes this further manifest. These, which they called *clacka-brath*, were spherical stones of an immense size, which were raised upon other flat ones, into which they inserted a small prominence, which fitted the cavity so exactly, and was so concealed by loose stones lying round

† Himer. ap. Phot. in Orat. ad Ursic. Etiam Dio. Sicul. ubi supra, et Porphy. in vita Pythag.

died philosophy under Abaris the Hyperborean.—For the country of Abaris, see (besides Toland) Carte's Hist. Eng. vol. i. p. 52, 53.

‡ Suidas (in Pythag.) says, that he stu-

† l. 3.

round it, that nobody could discern the artifice. These globes were so balanced, that the least touch imaginable could make them turn and vibrate; whereas any thing of a greater force, by pressing their weight against the side of the cavity, rendered them absolutely immoveable. Of this kind was the famous GIGONIAN stone mentioned in the abridgment of Ptolemy Hephestion's history †. It stood, he says, near the Ocean; the name which those early writers gave to the Atlantic, in opposition to the Mediterranean sea. As the particular place is not mentioned, we can only say it stood somewhere within the Druidical pale, and probably on the Gaulish or British shore. But let this be as it will, it was manifestly a Druidical *rocking-stone*, or *clach-bbrath*; for he adds, that "it could be moved with so small a matter as the stalk of asphodel, whilst it remained immoveable against the greatest force that could be applied to it." In Britain, these stones were frequent; and some of them, till of very late, were to be met with. Sir R. Sibbald * describes, and explains the mystery of one of them, which was broken down by Cromwell's soldiers near a place called *Balvaird*, "the Bard or Druid's town." In Iona, the last asylum of the Caledonian Druids, there were several of these *clach-bbraths*, some of them of marble, not many ages back. And though the superstitious regard paid to these stones, occasioned their being defaced, and turned into the sea; yet the vulgar, thinking it essential to have something of the kind, have substituted other rough balls in their room, which are still shewn among the curiosities of the place, by the same name of *clacha-brath*, or "judgment-stones †."

THE

† l. 3. c. 3.

* Appendix to his history of Fife and Kinross.

Pennant's voyage---in Iona.

† See

THE use which the Druids made of these stones is obvious from their name. By passing the nicety of the mechanism upon the vulgar for a miracle, they used them in deciding causes; and, like their *gabba-bheil*, or "trial by fire," managed them with such art, that they seemed to have the miraculous sanction of heaven to confirm their sentence.—Some time after the introduction of Christianity, these stones, from the different acceptations of the word *brath*, and from the new ideas affixed to the divinity-terms of the Druids, were supposed to refer to the *last judgment*. Accordingly, a story was set on foot, and is still kept up, that the world was to come to a period whenever these balls, by their circumvolutions, should wear through the flags upon which they rested. From this notion, they were for some ages well driven about, by such as were "impatient for the consummation of all things." But, in proportion as this zeal cooled, their motion began to stagnate; and, if we may judge from the state of rest in which they have been for some years back, we may conjecture that few men are now impatient for the approach of that awful period.

IN speaking of the knowledge which the Druids had of the mechanic powers, we must not overlook that amazing monument of it, the fabric of Stonehenge. Stones of 30 or 40 tons, that must have been a draught for 150 oxen, carried too from the distance of 16 computed miles, raised to a vast height, and placed in their beds with such ease, that their mortises were made exactly to tally;—all this was a labour of such arduousness and difficulty, that modern philosophers, with all their boasted improvements in science and art, must behold it with wonder. No other evidence is necessary to shew how well the Druids, who have certainly an indu-

dubitable right to this edifice, understood both the theory and the practice of mechanical philosophy *.

AMONG the *arcana* of nature which our Druids were acquainted with, there are many presumptive, if not positive, proofs, for placing the art of gunpowder, or artificial thunder and lightning; though, like all their other mysteries, they kept the invention of it a secret. Some learned men allow, that the priests of Delphos were in possession of this art; though, for the service of their god, and the interest of their own order, they kept it a mystery. The storm of thunder and lightning which, in three several attempts made to rob their temple, kindled in the face of the invaders as they approached it, and drove back, with loss and terror, both Xerxes and Brennus, cannot be imagined any other than this †. Providence cannot be supposed to have taken such concern in the preservation of that idolatrous edifice, as to work a series of miracles so very seasonably in its favours. Whoever reads the accounts which we have of the celebration of the mysteries of Ceres, will plainly see, that it was this secret which constituted the most wonderful part of them. "The probationers who were to be initiated, were led into a part of the temple that was full of darkness and horror. Then, all on a sudden, a strong light darted in upon them. This quickly disappeared, and was followed with a terrible noise like thunder. Fire again fell down like lightning; which, by its continual flashes, struck terror into the trembling spectators ‡."—The cause of this artificial lightning and thunder is plain. And if the priests of Delphos, or the

K

lazy

* Stukeley's Stonehenge. Anc. Hist. — *Of the Gauls, &c.*
Miscel. on anc. and mod. learning; with Herod. & Diod. Sicul. &c.
Sicul. & Plut. in Anc. Hist. *Athen.*

† Temple's
‡ Diod.

lazy monks of later times, could find out such an art, which the old Chinese philosophers are likewise said to have been acquainted with, and which seems to have made a part in the mystery of the Egyptian Isis, why may we not suppose, that those great searchers into nature, the Druids, might also light upon the secret? The impressions of dread which thunder and lightning are so apt to make upon the mind, would certainly induce the Druids to try, if possible, to counterfeit these awful phenomena; as the invention of any thing like them would be a most useful engine to keep the wondering world in awe of them. And if we consider the deep and long researches of these colleges of philosophers, their being possessed of the experiments of a series of ages before, and an extensive communication with other countries, we can hardly suppose the mystery of the nitrous grain could escape them. Nature is seldom so shy as to hide herself from those who court her so studiously as did the Druids.

THESE presumptions premised, then, we may observe in Lucan's satirical description * of the Druidical grove near Marfeilles, a plain evidence of this invention. "There is a report (says he) that the grove is often shaken, and strangely moved, and that dreadful sounds are heard from its caverns; and that it is sometimes in a blaze, without being consumed." In the poem of *Dargo the son of the Druid of Bel*, phenomena of a somewhat similar nature are mentioned. No ordinary meteor would have been so much noticed by the poet, nor so much dreaded by the people. But what gives still more strength to this argument, is a remark that may be made on some expressions in the language of the order we speak of.

The

* Pharsal. l. 3.

The Galic word for lightning is *De'lan*, or *De'lanach*; that is, literally, "the flash or flame of a God:" and the name for any lesser flash, that is quick and sudden as lightning, is *Druil'an*, or *Druil'anach*, which means, "the flash or flame of the Druids." Thus, for instance, the quick flash that bolts from red-hot iron, when struck on the anvil just after coming out of the forge, is called *Druil'anach*. And, in a well-known fragment of Ossian *, in which he speaks of some arms that were fabricated by Luno, the Scandinavian Vulcan, the sword of Oscar is distinguished by this epithet, and compared to the *flame of the Druids*; which shews, that there was such a phenomenon, and that it was abundantly terrible.—With the mystery these philosophers seem plainly to have been acquainted; but their interest, and perhaps their mercy, led them to keep the terrible art still a secret.

MANY other observations might be derived from the Galic language, which might give us some more hints of the knowledge of the Druids, if they had not already led us away so far. In short, every thing within the circle of *Druil'eachd*, or "magic," or, to speak more properly, within the compass of natural experimental philosophy, was the study of the Druids; and the honour of every wonder that lay within that verge was always allowed them. Nothing was supposed to be above their reach, except the few greater and more awful phenomena of nature. These only were ascribed to the Supreme Being, and allowed to have been the immediate operation of his hand. This much is implied in the Celtic name for miracle; which is *mior-Bheil*, or *meur-Bheil*, "the finger of Be'il †."

K 2

Thus

* Called *an Gabha'*, or *The smith*. The words are,

'S gum bi 'a Druil'anach lann Ofsair,

'S gum bi Chofgarach lann Chaoilte.

† The French *merveille*, and the English *marvel*, seem to be from the same root.

Thus the Druids and their Be'il divided the wonders of the world between them. If those which fell to the share of the priests were not the most awful, they were at least the most numerous.

C H A P. V.

Of the MEDICAL Profession of the DRUIDS.

A FEW remarks upon the Druids, considered in the light of physicians †, shall bring us to conclude our account of them.

FROM the temperance and exercise of men in early times, the constitution would be rarely broke, and the health but seldom impaired. To all the diseases which spring from idleness and luxury, the two fruitful sources of malady, they would be entire strangers. The wounds received in war, or the falls and bruises which were incidental to hunting, were probably the most common complaints; and the virtues of a few simples and unguents, to which the Druids could be no strangers, afforded an easy and effectual cure for them. During the experiments of many ages, they could not fail to arrive at a proper knowledge of these things, although they should have no more learning or invention than what necessity does generally inspire. The Highlanders, having seldom access to the help of the physician or surgeon, still perform very surprising and speedy cures by their knowledge of the herbs of the mountain. These they still gather “by the side of their secret stream;”

† Plin. l. 24, &c.

stream;" and by their success afford a demonstration, that a kind Providence hath furnished every country with medicines for all those diseases which are natural to it; tho' not always for those which are imported by luxury, and nourished by idleness.

THE sovereign remedy of the Druids, or the *all-heal* (*uillce*) which made, at least, a principal ingredient in every cure, was the *mistletoe* of the oak, or the *mistletoe* *. The uncommon regard which they paid to this, seems not to have been owing so much to any intrinsic virtue in itself, as to teach men to place their chief dependance for health upon the Deity; from whose temple or consecrated grove, this simple, which gave their efficacy to all the rest, was taken. It was to inculcate the same sovereign regard to GOD that they "solemnly prayed to him to give a blessing to his own gift †;" as if they would have men always remember, that no medicine could be effectual, nor any physician successful, without the help of GOD. A notion, though now grown obsolete, highly worthy of imitation.

WITH regard to those trifling ceremonies which the Druids are said to have used in pulling and preparing their herbs and simples, they seem to have been recorded more with a view to expose the order, than to inform posterity. It was their maxim, indeed, to keep every thing in a mist; but this was hardly so necessary here, as nobody would expect a cure till the Druid had first implored upon the means the benediction of heaven. It is not, however, improbable, but that, after the decline of their power, when the Roman writers were acquainted with them, they might, in order to make a mystery of a trade which they were

them

* Plin. 24. 44.

† Ibid.

then forced to practise for a livelihood, use some poor shifts and ceremonies, which in their prosperity they would have scorned to stoop to. Some charms still practised by the vulgar on these occasions, afford a presumption that the Druids sometimes used them.

For lingering diseases, inward complaints, and mental disorders, the Druids seem to have chiefly recommended, or at least to have prescribed in conjunction with other means, a change of air, exercise, the cold bath, and drinking of wells of some particular quality. For this end, they fixed, in places of considerable height and distance, upon some well, the waters of which were to be drunk or bathed in, according as the case of the patient or the quality of the spring required. To this, in the milder seasons of the year, they were to make three several tours, and to perform several ceremonies with a religious exactness; but with which religion had manifestly no other concern, than as a decoy to make them go through the service. Or rather, by teaching them to consider the matter in a religious light, and by directing their eyes to heaven for a remedy, their hopes and expectations were greatly raised: which would go a great way towards effecting their cure; and which, by increasing their devotion, and laying them under additional obligations to a good behaviour, would conduce much to make them better members of society. Some of those Druidical waters retain to this day their credit. That of Strathfillan, in particular, is still famous. It is situated near what is supposed to be the highest ground in Scotland; and as it can have but few inhabitants near it, the most of the patients must be from a distance; so that they have not only the purest air, but likewise abundance of exercise.

exercise. From the remotest corners of Argyleshire and other places they flock thither in crowds, in the beginning of summer and of harvest, as to a *panacea* for every disorder. Three several journeys are necessary; and if the patient should happen to die before he has accomplished them, one of his nearest surviving friends is bound in conscience to complete the unfinished pilgrimage. This is believed equally essential to procure a *requiem* both for the manes of his friend, and for his own. Hence it is no uncommon thing to see a sturdy fellow travel an hundred miles to fulfil the ceremony. If this trouble was not to be incurred by the patient's friends, they might not possibly be at so much pains to give him their assistance to use the means of obtaining a cure in his own person. The chief ceremonies performed after reaching the water, are, bathing thrice, and going thrice round some cairns at a moderate distance, performing always the circumvolutions *deis'iul*, or in the same direction with the course of the sun. These and some other rites manifestly shew the custom to be of Druidical origin. If *Fillan* was the tutelar saint of the place in later times, and not a Druid, he might possibly find his interest in countenancing the practice, and giving it the sanction of his name. Indeed, if any superstitious practice could be said to deserve a toleration, it was this; which, though disguised under that mysterious veil, has nevertheless a foundation in good sense, and has often proved sanative. For, what with the change of air, which is there in the greatest purity; the exercise; the season of the year; the bath, impregnated too with a mineral; and, above all, the strong faith of obtaining a cure—the effect is surprising upon the multitude; insomuch that generally

rally two in three of them return home, if not well, at least much better than if they had returned from the hands of some of the Faculty.

BUT the chief care of the Druids seems to have been to prevent, rather than to cure diseases. For this end, they delivered some general prescriptions for the preservation of health, in short maxims or adages, which it would be no burden to the memory to retain. One of these, and perhaps the best that could be delivered, recommends in three words, as the chief recipe for health, *cheerfulness, temperance, and exercise or early rising* §.

FROM these few hints we may observe, that the Druids acted in their medical, with the same consummate wisdom and policy as they did in every other capacity. They first devised the means which were most likely to operate; and for the surer performance of these means, they called in religion, or, if you will, the powerful engine of superstition, to their aid.

THUS have we considered the order of the Druids, the nature of their institution, and the variety of their offices, as distinctly as the materials afforded us by ancient historians, and by the remains of their own language, would allow. The institution seems to have been founded on the most extensive plan, and with the deepest policy. It appears to have been their great aim to make a monopoly of all authority, and to engross in their own hands almost every atom both of civil and religious power. To compass this end, no engine which human wit could devise had been left untried; and no pains had been spared, which human strength could execute. It is

§ Bi gu sugach, geannnaidh, mocheir'each.

is therefore no wonder if their endeavours grew to be so successful, and their power so enormous. No order ever acquired so high an ascendant over the human mind; much less did any extend their influence so far, or preserve it for so long a period. From this vast sway of theirs, we might judge, although we had not such proofs of it, that by no superficial merit could they have attained to it. Mankind, in the most civilized and enlightened state, may, for a little, be imposed upon with a fair appearance, and with plausible pretensions; but, even in the most barbarous æra, they cannot always be deceived with mere shew instead of reality. That must be solid merit which can maintain its credit long. Accordingly, we have seen that the Druids were, by their conduct and character, as much entitled to love and esteem, as they were, by their power, to obedience and respect. The most part of life must have been spent in probation, and one unremitting series of good and great actions must have been strewed over every part of it, before any one could be admitted a member of this society. Habits so well confirmed, could not be easily shaken off. In the almost evening of life, they would not readily decline from that path to which they had been so long accustomed; especially as they had still before them some object of ambition to engage their perseverance, and to keep alive their attention to character.

As the order had thus acquired their power by real merit, we find it was by the same title they maintained it. Accustomed to an austere, studious, and ascetic life, and using their power only for the good government of society, without having any separate interests of their own to promote, nobody grudged them their authority. The yoke, it is true, might gall at times; but it was as sel-

L

dom

dom as possible, and still men found it their interest to bear it. To have been able to govern and keep in awe so many fierce and warlike tribes, for such a course of ages, affords a manifest proof of the uncommon wisdom and address of the Druids. This address, however, nobody will pretend, on all occasions, to justify. But the times in which they lived were those of priestcraft and superstition. To give these things the best direction they were capable of, is all that could be expected of the persons under consideration. And this much they seem to have done, from their success in maintaining so well the order and peace of society.

THERE is, however, one thing in the conduct of the Druids which we must both blame and regret. They made a mystery of every thing, and kept all their discoveries wrapt up in mists and darkness. This, considering the number, and the great application of these philosophers, must have been an unspeakable loss, not only to their contemporaries, but to succeeding generations. Yet, even this mysterious conduct was probably necessary to support the veneration and authority of their order; which, as matters then stood, was essential to the good government of their people. Men were not yet ripe for a plain form of laws, to be obeyed merely for their own sake; nor had naked truth and abstracted virtue charms sufficient to allure them, without being dressed in that superstitious garb with which the uncivilized mind is so apt to be pleased. Their jealousy of any thing that might derogate from their respect, seems, however, to have exceeded all bounds, when it kept them from trusting any part of their knowledge to writing. For this crime, they seem to be justly punished in their character and fame with posterity. Their conduct herein has not only deprived them of
the

the vast honour which their great wisdom and learning, if recorded, seemed to promise them; but also given room to their enemies to allege of them whatever they pleased, without any danger of being contradicted. If the Druids envied the world that vast treasure of knowledge, which took them so many ages to amass together; the world, to be revenged for the injury, has never stepped out of its way to search for so many of the scattered fragments as might give a tolerable notion of their authors. Rather than be at this trouble, it takes their character on the word of their professed enemies, who, unhappily for the Druids, have been their only historiographers.

FROM the amazing growth of the Druidical system, whose roots extended so deep and so far, it is surprising how any storm could overturn it, were it not that the seeds of decay are interwoven with all the affairs of men, which, like themselves, cannot possibly survive a certain period. From almost the days of Noah, to those of J. Cæsar, had Druidism subsisted in Gaul and Britain. And, even in that advanced age, such was its strength, that it almost defied the Roman power to conquer it. All the legions brought against it, only wounded without killing it. The severest edicts behaved to follow them*; and the still keener, though smoother, weapon, the erection of schools and academies†. At last, worn out with age and sufferings, this formidable phantom was forced to take shelter in the retired isles of Anglesey and Iona; where, though weak and effete with years, it lived till the gospel, that glorious *day-spring from on high, visited the multitude of the Gentile isles*, and

L 2

banished

* Sueton. in vit. Claud. Plin. l. 30. c. 1.

† Tac. Annal. 3. 43.

banished with its light this spectre of darkness. To pave the way for this, seems to have been the great end which Providence had to serve in these countries by the Roman conquests, although it was in their heart only *to destroy and cut off nations not a few*. And it is remarkable, that when the Caledonian mountains opposed the Roman arms with their insurmountable barrier, a civil dissension was made to answer their end where they could not penetrate. The Druids, by an unseasonable and overstrained exertion of their declining power, excited the people to shake off a yoke which pressed the forer upon them, when it should have been rather slackened *. In this effort for liberty they happily succeeded, and became disposed to embrace the first dawnings of a new and better religion.

* Trathal, grandfather to the celebrated Fingal, having been chosen Vergobretus or Generalissimo of the Caledonian army in a war with the Romans, was not disposed at his return to resign his office at the request of the Druids, who would still keep up the honour of their order by peremptorily insisting upon a compliance. Upon this a civil war commenced, in which the Druids and their abettors were overthrown, and made to suffer from their countrymen the same fate which the order had every where else suffered from the Romans. What facilitated this overthrow was, that few of the principal families had been then members, or even disciples. Their continual wars with the Romans had, for some time back, taken up their whole attention. The Druids afterwards got some aid from Scandina-

via; but after a few unsuccessful efforts, they were forced at length to retire to Iona, where they were not quite extinct till the coming of St. Columba, in the sixth century.—But though the order of the Druids was by that time extinct, their superstitions and ceremonies for a long time after remained. The undue and superstitious regard which continued to be paid to the sun and moon, and to the groves, lakes, and rivers, which had been the appendages of their worship, occasioned many edicts against these things in Gaul, during the middle centuries. In England, we meet with one to the same purpose by *Canute* in the eleventh century; and, if it was not to avoid prolixity, many observations might be added to those already made, to shew how many of the Druidical rites maintained a footing in North Britain to an era much later.

gion. For this exchange we can never be sufficiently thankful. Druidism may have been the purest of all Pagan superstitions, and perhaps the very wisest of all institutions that were merely human. But our religion is divine. Considered in this view, the subject which we have been treating of is not altogether unimportant. Nor is it altogether uninteresting in any light in which we view it. The imperfect account which it gives, of the philosophy, religion, and government, of a considerable part of the globe, during so great a portion of time, can be a matter of indifference only to those who are not interested in the history of mankind. And such persons are not men: they are something more; or, as probably, something less.

A
D I S S E R T A T I O N
O N T H E
A U T H E N T I C I T Y
O F
O S S I A N ' s P O E M S.

FROM one who offers to the public a few more remains of ancient Galic Poetry, something may, perhaps, be expected on a question which has been a good deal agitated of late years: Whether or not the works of Ossian are genuine? To all men of judgment, taste, and candour, who have perused, with attention, either these poems themselves, or the able and elegant defence of their authenticity by Dr Blair, this may justly appear a superfluous labour. Some regard, however, is due even to the cavils of sceptics, lest they should misconstrue our silence, and imagine, when their objections are not answered, that the point is yielded: and a still greater regard is due to the injured memory of the venerable Celtic bard, who can no longer answer for himself, or vindicate his own cause.

On these accounts, I presume to advance, in support of Ossian, a
few

few remarks, which my local situation, more than any other capacity, may enable me to offer. The method in which this is proposed to be done, is, first, to mention some of the *internal*, and then of the *external evidences* for the authenticity of these poems; and afterwards to *answer* the chief *objections* which have been made to their being genuine.—In the prosecution of this argument, we shall have such frequent occasion to turn over our eyes on the ancient customs and manners of that people to whom these poems relate, as shall in a great measure relieve us from that tediousness and languor which often attend subjects of debate and controversy.

I. WITH regard to the first, and even the second head proposed, we need do little more than refer to that eminent critic, by whom these points have been already so well discussed; while we are hastening forward to what we have principally in view, the answer of objections which it did not lie in his way to combat, before they had been started.

THESE compositions then, as he observes *, have all the characters of antiquity so deeply impressed upon them, that no reader of taste and judgment can deny their claim to it. They exhibit so lively a picture of customs which have disappeared for ages, as could only be drawn from nature and real life. The features are every where so strongly marked, that few portraits of the life continually passing before us are found to be drawn with so much likeness; and the train of ideas are every where so much out of the common line of modern composition, that nothing but the real circumstances which they describe could possibly have suggested them.

THE

* See Dr Blair's Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian.

THE manners uniformly relate to a very early stage of society. Hunting was still the chief occupation; and pasturage was only beginning to be attended to. To any period more advanced than this, there is no hint, no allusion throughout the poems. No traces of agriculture or commerce, no mention of cities, very little of arts, except such as were absolutely necessary, and still less of sciences, are there to be met with. The circle of ideas, as corresponds with an early æra, is very circumscribed.

THAT distinction of ranks which arises from the establishment of property and advancement of society is in these poems nowhere to be found. The first heroes prepare their own repasts, and, indiscriminately, condescend to the most menial offices. Valour in the men, and beauty in the women, hold generally the first rank of praise; and the virtues of the mind, though by no means overlooked, are often mentioned but as secondary qualifications. Lesser contentions arise from causes frequently slight, but always natural. A rivalry in love, an omission at a feast, or an affront at a tournament, prove, not seldom, the foundation of a deadly quarrel between single heroes. And the wars between whole tribes are carried on, not to enlarge their territory; but to revenge, perhaps, the killing of a few deer on their mountains; the carrying off a few arms, the chief furniture of their halls; or the taking forcibly away one of their women. And as their occupation was hunting and war, so the chief object of their ambition and pursuit was to obtain, on these accounts, an immortality of fame in the song of the bard. This obtained, they thought themselves secure of that immortality of happiness, which they looked for in their lowly paradise.

M

THE

THE notions of a future state which these poems exhibit, are no less strongly marked with the characters of antiquity, than the picture which they give of manners. This creed is throughout supported; admirably suited to the times; but, like the manners, extremely simple. Were the poems of Ossian not genuine, and that we could think a modern imagination could grasp so strong an idea of manners and notions so remote; why, it may be asked, should the poet fix, without any necessity, upon an æra so barren of ideas and transactions, when, in a period by many centuries later, he might have a much wider circle to play in?

THE language too, and the structure, of these poems, like every other thing about them, bear the most striking characters of antiquity. The language is bold, animated, and metaphorical; such as it is found to be in all infant states; where the words, as well as the ideas and objects, must be few; and where the language, like the imagination, is strong and undisciplined*. No abstract, and few general terms occur in the poems of Ossian. If objects are but introduced in a simile, they are generally particularized. It is "the young pine of Inishuna;" it is "the bow of the showery Lena." This is a striking feature in the language of all early states, whose objects and ideas are few and particular, and whose ordinary conversation

* In the Galic, being an original language, most of the words are to this day energetical, and express some property or quality of their object; while it has a further advantage in having few or no words derived from any other language. By this means, to one who understands both equally well, it conveys a clearer and more forcible idea than the English, which is, for the most part, either arbitrary, or

derived from other tongues. To which we may add, that the Galic, having no words to express all the accession of ideas and arts which attend the advancement of modern science, is still obliged to have frequent recourse to metaphor and circumlocution; a circumstance which gives it a poetical air and emphasis which no modern language can be possessed of.

* For

versation is, of course, figurative and poetical; adorned with such tropes of rhetoric as a modern would scarce venture to use in the boldest flights of poetry. This character, therefore, so conspicuous in the poems of Ossian, could be impressed so deeply on them, only by one who saw, and felt, and bore a part in the scenes he is describing. A poet in his closet could no more compose like Ossian, than he could act like him in the field, or on the mountain.

THE composition also, though it is, like the language, bold, nervous, and concise, is yet plain and artless; without any thing of that modern refinement, or elaborate decoration, which waits on the advancement of literature. No foreign ornaments are hunted after. The poet is always content with those which his subject naturally suggests, or which lie within his view. Further than that tract of heaven, earth, air, and sea, which lay, I may say, within his study, he rarely makes any excursion. Whatever suited his purpose within this circle, seldom escaped his notice; but his imagination, though quick and rapid, seldom chose to travel abroad for any materials which might be had at home. The wild and grand nature with which he was familiar, and his own vast genius, were the only resources to which he cared to be indebted for his ornaments. By this means his compositions are marked with a signature which they could never receive from the lamp or from the closet: a signature which he alone could impress, who saw before him, in that apartment in which he mus'd, those objects which he describes; who bore a part in those expeditions which he celebrates; and who fought in those battles which he sings*.

M 2

BEFORE

* For further satisfaction on this head, in his *Sketches of Man* produces many we beg leave to refer the reader to the direct and collateral proofs for the authenticity of Ossian's poems.

BEFORE we quit this part of the argument, I would observe, that all the internal characters mentioned, appear far more striking in all that ever I heard of the Galic, than they do in the English translation. In the 7th book of Temora, which because it is best known I instance, the language, as well as the ideas, the kind of verse, the whole texture of the composition, the every thing about it, wears such an air of antiquity, and has so venerable, so grand, and so uncommon a cast, that the first critics in the language scruple not to affirm that a modern could no more compose it, than he could by charms bring down the moon from heaven. To imitate with success the manner of Ossian will, I imagine, be found difficult; but to counterfeit his style, his verse, and very language, infinitely more so. Within these thirty years, one or two professed Galic poets have attempted it*. But they had only gone through a few stanzas, when they discovered, what every competent judge had discovered before they had gone through so many lines, how unable they were to support the character which they personated. They immediately threw aside the mask which so ill fitted them, and never afterwards resumed it.—That persons who had thus a genius for Galic poetry, who had long professed and long practised it, and who from their infancy had been intimate with the pattern which they endeavoured to copy, should fail even in a short sonnet, while one who had not in these respects half their advantages, was able to go through whole books without failing in one instance, were indeed a wonder; and to believe it is any thing but scepticism. But it is time we should proceed,

II. To

* One is Glendovan, Argyleshire; the other in Glenlochry, Perthshire.

II. To the external, and more positive proof of the authenticity of Ossian.

THAT there have been in the Highlands of Scotland, for some ages back, a vast many poems that were ascribed to Ossian, and repeated by almost all persons and on all occasions, is a fact so indisputable, that nobody can be hardy enough to deny it. There is not an old man in the Highlands, but will declare that he heard such poems repeated by his father and grandfather, as pieces of the most remote antiquity, long before the translation of them had ever been thought of*.—There is not a district in the Highlands but what has many places, waters, isles, caves and mountains, which are called, from time immemorial, after the names of Ossian's heroes†.—There is not a lover of ancient tale or poetry, however illiterate, but is quite intimate with almost every single name, character, or incident in Ossian's poems‡.—Bards, who are themselves several centuries old, quote them, imitate them, and allude to them§.—The ordinary conversations and comparisons of the

* Long before Mr Macpherson appeared, Mr Stone schoolmaster at Dunkeld conceived the idea of translating Ossian's poems, and published some specimens in the Scots magazine of that time; but his early death prevented the execution of his design. After him Mr Pope, minister of Rea, began to collect them with the same view; but did not go through with his plan.

† These names are so common, that where I now sit, not far from Inverary in Argyleshire, I could enumerate a long list in one view, such as *Cruach-Fhinn*, "the hill of Fingal;" *Innis-Chonnain*,

Innis-Aildhe, *Innis-Raoine*, *Innis-Chonnail*, &c. the isles of Connan, Aldo, Ryno, and Connal. Nothing is more frequent in all parts of the Highlands than names and monuments of Ossian's heroes.

‡ Those who have read the translation with most care, have not so lively nor so just an idea of its history and characters, as these plebeians have; owing to their early intimacy with the songs and tales of the original, and the frequent reference to them (as we shall see below) in their proverbs and conversation.

§ Of this the translator gives many instances in his notes;—of Roscrana, Culallin

the Highlanders frequently refer to the customs and characters mentioned in them ¶; and many of their most common proverbs are lines borrowed from Ossian *. To which we may add, that there are still to be found a few MSS. where several of these poems have

a

allin, Sul-mala, with an imitation by Kenneth MacAlpin's bard, and some other ancient poets;—all in *Temora*. To these many more might be added. Every body, who has listened to old Galic songs, has often heard the generous compared, in Ossian's words, to *Fionn nam fheadh*, and *Mac Cu'il nach d'eur neach*, "Fingal, from whom none ever went sad;" (*Fing. B. 6.*)—the hospitable, to *Cathmor*, *cèann-uighe na daí*, and *Rí Atha na feilè*; and the desolate, to *Ossian an deigh nam Fiann*. I shall only mention two other allusions of this kind, which, as they are found in a printed collection, will be less liable to be controverted than others quoted from oral tradition. There, one poet, not very modern, speaks of Ossian's poems as the constant entertainment of his time in the winter-nights; and another, avowedly ancient, imitates the manner of Ossian, makes particular mention of him and Daol, another ancient bard, and wishes for admittance to the same airy hall with both. See M'Donald's Songs, p. 5. & 33.

¶ *Cothrom na Feine*, "the equal combat," or "combat of heroes," so often mentioned by Ossian, is so frequently referred to, that if only two boys wrestle, nothing is more common than for their companions to order fair play by crying, *Cothrom na Feine dhoibh*, "let them have the equal combat of Fingal's heroes." A

strong man is often called a *Cuchullin*, "co laidir ri Cuchullin;" a man of an unjust imperious temper, and brutal force, a *Gara mac Stairn*, "A Swaran, son of Starno;" and a contentious person, from the peevish ill-natured Connan, is called *Connan-duine*.

* "Fingal, who never injured a foe," and "Fingal delights not in battle, tho' his arm be strong," are favourite expressions of Ossian, and the original (*Cha tug Fionn riabh blar gun chumba*—"Battle of Lora") is among the Highlanders a favourite proverb to recommend, especially to the mighty, a peaceable and merciful disposition.—Another is that excellent advice of Fingal to Oscar, "Never search for the battle, nor shun it when it comes;" *Na seachinn an iorguill, 'sna h iarr i.*

FING. B. 3.

Cha do dhiobair riabh Fionn
Fear a laimbe deise,

recommends the example of "Fingal, who never forsook his friend."

Cha bhuadhaich gu brath am meat;—"They best succeed who dare." *Fing. B. 3.*—To avoid being tedious, I shall mention no more of these common sayings and proverbs from Ossian, though they are certainly a most irrefragable argument of the authenticity and great antiquity of his poems, as also of the universal regard that has been always paid to them.

a place ‡, and some old men who still repeat a few of them, as of old, round the flame of the winter fire §."

BUT are these the very poems, it will now be asked, that have been translated and published by Mr Macpherson? The observations already made have pretty much paved the way to prove, that they are the very same.—The poems which this gentleman and his friends gathered from oral tradition were certainly no other than those we have spoken of as commonly repeated in the country, and the manuscripts he got were the same, only in greater perfection *. —While these poems were translating, they were accessible to all the curious who could understand them †. They afterwards lay
for

‡ Captain M'Lachlan of the 55th regiment can shew a few, of a letter and vellum so old as to be scarce intelligible. They are the remains of many that had been collected by his predecessors, the M'Lachlans of Kilbride, who were great admirers of Ossian. A few less ancient manuscripts of some of these poems are in the possession of severals.

§ Although this custom is fast vanishing, there are yet abundance of instances in all parts of the country to confirm the assertion. Near me just now, in the parish of Kilninver, is a tradesman and poet of the name of M'Pheal, whom I have heard, for weeks together, repeat ancient tales and poems, many of them Ossian's, from 5 to 10 o'clock in the winter night. In Glendovan, Kilchrenan parish, is a family of the name of M'Dugal; and in Arivean, Glenorchay parish, another of the name of M'Nicol; now almost extinct, both of which were such *senachies* for some generations back, that they could

entertain at this rate for a whole winter season. What wonder if the poems of Ossian, where such was the custom, have been so long preserved!

* Mr M'Pherson is said to have got his largest and most valuable MS. of Ossian from a Mr M'Donald in Croidart; it was known in the country by the name of the *Leabhar dearg*, or "The book with the red cover." Another he got from Mac-vurieb, bard to Clanronald.

† It is remarkable, that they were the best judges to whom Mr M'Pherson has always been readiest to shew his originals. If they had not been authentic; from these he should most conceal them. Not long ago, he offered, of his own accord, to shew them to Mr M'Laggan of the 42d, who is among the best judges of the Galic language and antiquities, and who had furnished him with some part of the original poems. And professor M'Leod of Glasgow, some years ago, was
all.

for a considerable time in the hands of the bookseller, for the inspection of all who chose to see them; and, as if all this had not been enough, they were offered to the public, had subscribers been found to encourage the undertaking. Nothing could be more unlike an imposture than all this. The last particular especially, was such a bold appeal to thousands, who were capable of knowing whether these were the identical poems which they had been in use of hearing from their infancy, and which they themselves had but a few months before given to the editor;—this, I say, was such a bold appeal, as nothing but the consciousness of integrity and truth could possibly presume upon. Besides this, a long list of respectable persons, gentlemen and clergymen *, who had been intimate with the original, avowed to the public, that these were Ossian's poems, and that the translation was literal. That all these should prostitute their character to support a falsehood, in which they had no particular interest, is an idea too gross for the conception of any body who is not himself utterly lost to all sense of character and name.

AMIDST the general wreck to which our traditions and poems have fallen for some time back, many pieces of Ossian are still remaining, and are found to correspond with the translation. A Highlander may perhaps be suspected of partiality in making this assertion; but several gentlemen of candour from other countries have made the experiment, by causing such as had never any access to see the translation, to give the meaning of those pieces which they

allowed to compare two whole books of Fingal with the original.

Dr Blair's Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian.

* See a list of these in the Appendix to

† Mr

they repeated : and they declare, that, on comparing the Galic and the English, they were entirely satisfied with the justness of the translation †.

THOSE fragments of Ossian, which are still most generally known, are, as we should naturally suppose, some of the most beautiful parts of his composition. Among them are, The battle of Lora, the episode of the Maid of Craca, the most affecting parts of Carthon, Conlath, Croma, Berrathon, the death of Oscar in the first book of Temora, and almost the whole of Darthula. Now, if these and the like, are avowedly ancient, and undoubtedly the composition of Ossian, it is but justice to allow that he could compose any other part of the collection, none of it being equal to some of these in poetical merit.

ANY further arguments to prove that the poems we speak of are genuine translations from the Galic would, I trust, be superfluous *.

N

This

† Mr Percy, in his preface to *Reliques of old English Poetry*, tells, that he himself had often done this, and found the interpretation, which he had got *extempore*, correspond with the English translation, with which they had no access to be acquainted. Either these persons were inspired, or Ossian's poems are authentic.

* There is, however, one other argument that has too much weight to be passed over. It is an astonishing correspondence between some of these poems, and scenes which they are found to describe ; but which were too distant and too obscure for the translator ever to see or hear of, and concerning which there is not even a tradition, so far as ever I could learn ;

so that Mr M'Pherson must have found them in MS. otherwise they had never appeared. I mention one instance, chosen purposely from the part least known in Galic of the whole collection. It is one of the songs of Selma. The names of Daura and Erath there spoken of are so uncommon, that I am confident we may defy any body to produce any instance of their being heard in name, surname, or tradition. Yet in an obscure, and almost inaccessible part of Argyleshire, which it is certain the translator of Ossian never saw, and which from his own silence, the silence of tradition upon that story, and the distance and obscurity of the place, it is equally certain he never heard of,—in
this

This being allowed, then, as it well may, it will easily appear that they can belong to no æra but that very remote one to which the translator has assigned them.

A COURSE of many centuries must have intervened, before these compositions could become, as we have seen they were, the common tales, songs, and proverbs of a people. We can likewise trace back the genius of the Galic poetry and manners for several ages; and find by the difference, that it is far beyond these we must look for his æra †. The utter silence about Clans bids us retire still farther. To which we are also directed both by the names of places and persons mentioned in the poems themselves. In the time of Ossian, the names of the Hebrides, like those of the main land, were all descriptive and significant; from which it is evident, he lived before their conquest by the Norwegians *, as they got at that time their

pre-

this place can be traced out the very scene, and the very uncommon names of that episode, which of all the collection is perhaps the least known to a Galic antiquary. The island to which the traitor Erath beguiled Dura still retains his name of *Innis-Eraith*, "the island of Erath." The ferry and farm contiguous to it, derive from him also their name; and about a mile distant from it is another farm, consisting of an extensive heath bounded by a large mountain-stream, and still retaining from that unfortunate lady the name of *Dura'in*, "the stream of Daura." And what further confirms that this is the scene described by Ossian is, that several places within sight of it are denominated from Connal, and others of his heroes, whose names are better known. As no-

body can suppose that the translator of Ossian could thus stumble, by chance, on names the least common and places the least known, so as to make so many circumstances exactly correspond with his poems, without his ever knowing it, we must certainly allow this a most confounding proof of their authenticity.

† The decline of the Galic poetry was much owing to the abolition of the Druids, who instructed and superintended the order of the bards, as also to the office being made hereditary. The Galic manners degenerated equally fast after Kenneth M'Alpin removed the seat of royalty from Caledonia, to the country of the Picts whom he subdued.

* They were entirely conquered by Harold Harfager in 875; and so much in-

ferred

present names, which are not, like those on the continent, of a Gallic etymon. The names of persons in these countries likewise, ever since the introduction of Christianity, were almost all derived from apostles, saints, martyrs, missionaries, or crowned heads: but the proper names of Ossian are quite of another cast; all descriptive. This, together with his notions of a future state, which are so different from those which Christianity teaches, will clearly evince that he lived before it was propagated in this part of the kingdom. His translator gives several reasons for placing him about the end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth century*; and to enter into any nicer disquisition on the head, were as idle as it would be useless. That his poems are ancient and authentic, is all that we contend for. And, as we hope that sufficient evidence has been given for this, we proceed,

III. To answer some objections which have been made to their being genuine. Of these the most weighty are,—That such an early period could not produce such poems;—That if it had, they could not be so long preserved in so illiterate a country;—and, That the editions of these poems are not now more numerous.—Each of these objections we shall endeavour to discuss in order. Lesser obstacles may perhaps meet us in our way, which we shall endeavour to remove as they occur.

1. WITH regard to the first objection, there are many reasons that may account, not only for such excellent poetry, but even refined morals, being found in so early a period of society. Among all nations

N 2

whose

feited by the Danes for a considerable time and Ware's Antiq. p. 57. &c.

before, that they might be said to be in their * Dissertation prefixed to Ossian's possession. Torfæus in Orcad. p. 10, 11. poems.

whose earlier stages we have any account of, poetry was the first and favourite study. In poetry, legislators gave their codes, oracles their answers, and priests their precepts. In Greece, the old academy of the world, poetry was in this repute, not only before the introduction of letters, when the assistance which it gave the memory might plead in its favours; but, even long after that period, no composition could be relished that was destitute of the charms of poetry. Not only Orpheus and Linus, but the less ancient Hesiod and Homer, lived some ages before Pherecides *, who, according to Pliny, was the first who wrote prose in the Greek language.

AMONG the nations of the East, poetry had the same early attention paid to it. The book of Job, the oldest in the world, is highly poetical. In the western parts, the remains of Runic and Celtic poetry shew how early and how carefully this art was cultivated; insomuch, that some nations could never be reconciled even to the scriptures till they had got them in the form of poems †. And in the new world, the Spaniards and others have found excellent poetry among tribes entirely unacquainted with letters. To supply this defect, indeed, it was necessary this art should be encouraged by them, as well as for the high pleasure which it yielded. A desire of perpetuating their names, their actions, and useful inventions, is natural to mankind. And this, in early periods, must have been trusted to tradition, which could not preserve it long without the charms of verse and harmony of numbers. This alone could render the vehicle so light and easy of conveyance, that the trans-

* He lived about the time of Cyrus, as did also Phalaris, who wrote such elegant letters, and Æsop the writer of the fables. † Du Chene, ap. Pellout. hist. des Celt. 2. 10. that these acquired all at once a perfection which distances all future imitation.

AUTHENTICITY OF OSSIAN'S POEMS. 101

transmitting of it to posterity would be rather a pleasure than a burden. And once the practice was begun, the policy of every state found it useful to encourage it, as the best means of stirring up every noble spirit to imitate those actions which he heard so highly praised.

THE language of infant states is likewise, as was observed above, from its want of copiousness, strong, figurative, and poetical. Their passions are unfettered and free, and their imagination bold and active. These are all circumstances more favourable to poetry, than any in the more advanced stages of society; and those poets who have flourished nearest this early state in any country, are generally they who have best succeeded, if a happy genius seconded their situation. Hence the Muses have always their residence assigned them in the mountains: An allegory, by which the poets mean, that the hunting state, in which the body is unbroken with toil, and the mind easy and unencumbered with care, is the proper epocha of poetry. Now this was the æra in which Ossian lived; so that his situation was rather advantageous than otherwise, if he had but a genius to improve it.

BUT besides these circumstances, common to the ancient Caledonians with other states in the like period, there are others of a more peculiar nature, which must have had a happy influence both upon their poetry and morals.—Of these the institution of the Bards and Druids deserves the first mention. The Druids of Britain in general were in such estimation for their knowledge abroad, that from Gaul, and other neighbouring countries, disciples flocken to them as to a seminary of learning. At home, they were held in a still higher veneration. They were not only the priests
and

and philosophers, but virtually the very sovereigns of every state where their religion prevailed. They had the education of the young, the direction of the old, and no business whatever of any moment could be done without them. In natural philosophy, they had all the experiments of past ages flowing down to them in one uninterrupted channel, which was perpetually growing; inasmuch that it required a study of twenty years to become masters of their knowledge. And in morals, we may suppose they made at least as great a proficiency as the philosophers of other countries; considering their many and singular advantages. Accordingly, we are told, that, "contemning all sublunary things, they raised their thoughts to sublimer objects, and boldly asserted the soul's immortality †." In a word, no set of men were ever possessed of so much authority, or were held in so high a veneration, as the Druids. Every thing in this world was at their disposal; and they pretended, and were believed to have also, by a delegated power, the disposal of whatever was desirable in the other. What wonder, then, if every noble and amiable virtue flourished, under the patronage of this venerable order, to the degree that we find it represented in the poems of Ossian? Or what wonder if poetry arrived at such perfection, in a country where there was not only, from age to age, a standing order of poets, but such men as these to be its teachers, encouragers, and rewarders?

THE bards, too, whom we may call a lower order of religious, contributed greatly to form both the poetry and the morals of the period we speak of. No venal, mercenary tribe, were then the bards. Next to the Druids, they were of all men the most respected

† Amm. Marcel. l. 15.

ed †. They were chosen from the most promising geniuses, and from the best families ; insomuch that we find those of the royal line itself, as Ossian, Fergus, and Fillan, ambitious of being in the number. They were formed and educated in the college of the Druids ; and it depended on their behaviour and merit, whether they might not, one day, be initiated into their mysteries, and admitted as members. With the advantages of this education, and the spurs of this ambition, the bards would exert their talents for poetry, and recommend to the utmost every virtue which the Druids taught them to inculcate. And as every one's present fame and future happiness depended entirely, as they supposed, on the praise of the bard, every one would strive to the utmost to deserve it. By this means, the manners of the nation, by precept, by example, and by present as well as future interest, would soon be formed. Every great and amiable quality of the soul would expand itself ; and, where every thing contributed to forward its growth, would soon arrive, in fact, at a height, which, in our polished times, we are apt to consider as only ideal, or poetical.

THAT the songs of the bards should have so much influence on the manners of the Celtic tribes, will appear less strange, if we observe the effect which poetry has had on other nations in the like early period. When the poets ascribe to songs the power of bringing down the moon from heaven, charming the fiercest animals, and making rapid rivers stop their falling waters to listen to the poet's numbers ‡ ; they can certainly mean no less, than that poetry

† After the extinction of the Druids, the bards are said to have been for many ages the next in dignity to the king. The Scandinavian bards, or scalds, held the same privilege ; and, in the reign of the great Harold Harfager, sat next the king at table. Torfæus in Orcad.
‡ See Virg. ecl. 8.

try has power to raise the most violent passions, and to lay them; that it has power to change the nature, to conjure, to transport, to ravish. To what a degree this power was then exerted, is a matter of which we can form now no just idea. For, in the infancy of society, as in the infancy of life, the passions are not only more powerful and violent, but also more sudden, flexible, and yielding. In either case, till a certain advanced period is reached, we meet with no cool, calm, and deliberate determinations. Hence the greater influence which poetry has in that early period on the passions of mankind. An influence attested by the annals of the historian, no less than by the fable and allegory of the poet. There, to mention but a few instances, and these too in a much more advanced period than what we speak of, we find Sappho kindling in many breasts a passion, by no other beauty than that of her poems; we find the monster Phalaris melted into man, by the muse of Steichorus; Alexander leaping to his arms, as in a phrenzy, at the song of Timotheus; and the dispirited Spartans roused to courage by the songs of Tyrtæus. In consequence of this influence of poetry over the passions, we find, that in all states, the minority of which we have any account of, it has been encouraged and honoured; the person of its professors held sacred, and their character respected. The greatest lawgivers, as Lycurgus and Solon, practised or patronized the art; and the greatest warriors, as Alexander and Cæsar. The holiest men, as Moses, David, and Solomon, were eminent for their skill in it; and even the wild Scythian hero, Odin, thought it his interest as a statesman, to practise and recommend it. To polished nations, poetry affords pleasure; but to infant states, it affords not only pleasure, but advantage. And, for
the

the one reason or the other, both have never failed to recommend it, by making it an ingredient in their future felicity; all ages, nations, and religions, agreeing in giving music and poetry a place in their paradise, however much they differ in their other notions of it.—If, therefore, poetry has been thus early cultivated by other nations, and allowed to have such influence upon their morals, much more might it be expected to flourish here, under its peculiar advantages, so as to produce all the effects ascribed to it upon the Caledonian heroes.

It may be thought still less strange, that characters so respectable as the Celtic bards, should, under the auspices of the Druids, have such influence in forming the manners of their age, when we consider, that, in later and less pliant times, such strolling songsters as the *Provençal Trobadors* have been able to give rise to the romantic system of knight-errantry. The truth is, when the human mind becomes familiar with any set of ideas, and revolves them over for a long time, it takes pleasure in them from acquaintance, and contracts a likeness to them from the principle of imitation. In any period of society, therefore, the songs which men are most conversant with, must contribute much to form their temper and behaviour. But they do this more especially in the earliest stages, when the ideas, the transactions, the wants, and the cares of men are few; and when the mind, having little else to attend to, “hums” continually its song, and broods with pleasure over that favourite object.

IN accounting for the refinement of sentiments ascribed to the age of Fingal, we may join with the effects of poetry, those of its sister-art, music. The influence of this upon the passions, is, like

O

the

the other, univerfally allowed to be exceeding great. It muft therefore have been early laid hold of, as a proper handle for forming the morals of men. Accordingly, the poets, who always couch truth under their fables, have afcribed to the lyres of Orpheus, Arion, and Amphion, the miraculous power, not only of taming the wildeft of men, but of charming even wild beaft and fifhes. Nay, they tell us, that even the inanimate creation was wrought upon by fuch founds. Ravifhed by their magic force, trees defcended from their mountains; ftones rofe from their quarry; cities lifted their fpiry heads into the clouds; rivers ftopt, or changed their courfe, to liften; and fields, before difmal and dark, affumed a fmile of joy. Even the inexorable Pluto himfelf relented with the irrefiftible charms of the lyre of Orpheus, and, grimly fmiling, refigned to him his loved Eurydice.—Whatever allowance we make here for poetical liberty, we fhall ftill have this much left, that mufic has a vaft influence over the paffions, and had a principal hand in the firft civilization of mankind. This much modern, as well as ancient, poets hint to us, when they tell us that

“ Mufic has charms to foorthe the favage breaft,

“ To foften rocks, and bend the knotted oak.”

BUT, fhould any one think, that truth cannot be had from poets, we may add, that on this fubject, divines, philofophers, and lawgivers, have fpoken, though in a different language, the fame meaning. So fenfible were the ancients of the connexion between mufic and morals, that their religion and laws had generally the fuperintendency of the one as well as of the other. In Egypt, in Crete, and in Sparta, the laws regulated the number of ftrings in the lyre; and the laft-mentioned ftate banifhed Timotheus for the
crime

crime of adding to them. Even in scripture, the charming of an evil spirit, and the calming of the most violent fallies of nature, is ascribed to music, which the religious of almost all ages have adopted into their sacred service; if we except a few, who can perhaps give no orthodox reason for discarding this great help both of mending the manners, and of heightening the devotion. To a stranger, at least, they seem to lie under a vast disadvantage, in their attempts to form the heart with fewer tools than heaven and reason have allowed them, and cannot so easily soar aloft after taking off a part of their wings. But leaving these to affect that spirituality on earth, which, in their own belief, even the worship of heaven does not pretend to, we return to our subject.

MUSIC, we see, has been universally allowed to have an intimate connexion with the moral system. The ancient Caledonians then, were a nation of musicians. The art was not at all peculiar to the Bards, although they were the chief masters of it. Every hero, every virgin, could "touch the harp, and melt the soul *." This universality of the art was probably owing in some measure to the simplicity of the instrument. In the ancient states of Greece, the harp, consisting of only four strings, was of so simple a construction, that warriors, women, and even children, engaged in other pursuits and avocations, could play upon it. In Egypt the case was the same, insomuch that even the Israelitish women, notwithstanding the severity of their bondage, could all of them play on instruments of music †. The Caledo-

O 2

nian

* Beda gives us to understand, that, even in the 7th century, the harp was so generally played in Britain, that it was customary to hand it from one to one at their entertainments; and speaks of one who was so ashamed he could not play upon it, that he slunk away for fear of exposing himself. L. 4. c. 24.

† Exod. xv. 20.

* Tem-

nian or British harp we may suppose to have been, in its construction, equally simple, and in its effects equally powerful.—In the vicissitude of all human affairs, not only the ancient harp, but even the ancient science of music, has been in a great measure lost, and supplied only by what is made up of certain notes that fell into the fancy of a poor friar in chanting his matins *. But to whatever it was owing, the ancient music had such a power of moving the heart and opening the sluice of the tears, as some would pass now for poetical fiction; whilst better judges resolve it into true philosophy, and shew that the effect of music upon the passions became less powerful in proportion as the harmony became more complex †. This natural effect of the ancient music would be greatly heightened by the excellency of the Caledonian songs, with which their music was always accompanied ‡. And if the constant repetition of these, which breathed every tender feeling, kindled every noble passion, and celebrated every brave and generous action, had, singly, such effect as has been already remarked, how irresistible must have been their force when the harp joined all its charms in their aid!—The ancient Caledonian poetry is full of strokes of nature and of passion. The music would be congenial to it; tender, plaintive, and moving; a cast which still distinguishes the oldest of the Caledonian airs, and which of all others is best calculated to impress the heart with those soft and sympathetic feelings which are most favourable to morals. Its effect would be still more in-

* Temple's Miscel. vol. ii.

† See Gregory's Comp. View, and Brown's History of Music.

‡ Diodorus affirms this of the Celts in

general. It appears to have been the practice of other ancient nations also; for Plato calls instrumental music, by itself, an insipid thing, and treats it with great contempt.

increased by the reasons formerly mentioned of the passions and feelings of men being then strong, and the imagination warm, and easily yielding to every impression of enthusiasm and rapture. Men were not yet ashamed to indulge their innocent and tender feelings, when the soul was "harrowed up" with either pleasure or pain. Under the dominion of emotions not peculiar to the warmth of eastern climes, but the universal offspring of infant nature, they could freely "lift up their voice and weep," whether grief or joy demanded the sympathetic tear. In such an age then, such means, begun too when the mind was young and most susceptible of impression, and not only daily but hourly repeated, could not fail to give the soul a polish and a smoothness now hardly to be credited. Every repetition would, by association of ideas, "conjure up" all the emotions which the same song had formerly produced, with the ideas of innocent and early days annexed to them, and with the image of, perhaps, the lover, father, friend, or acquaintance, to whose memory the piece was consecrated: while at the same time a glow of emulation would mix with these tenderest feelings of the soul, fanned with the pleasing hope of receiving one day the like fame. Call him a lion or a tyger that could not be softened and civilized by those means; if he was a human being, he could not resist them. If the virtues of the ancient Caledonians, considering these causes, had been less perfect, the wonder had been greater than their being so exalted as Ossian describes them.

FROM the plain way of living and other circumstances told us of the age of Fingal, we are apt to connect with it the idea of barbarous and savage. Some other tribes in the hunting state have been

been found so *; and we infer that the Caledonians were like them, although the peculiar circumstances already mentioned were sufficient to create a vast difference. With these, one other circumstance must be taken into the account, which is, that though this people were then in the hunting state, or but just emerging out of it, they were far from being a very infant colony. The Highlands of Scotland, owing to the untowardness of their soil and climate, may be said to be still in a state of pasturage, or but very little beyond it. And if they have remained in this second stage for fifteen hundred years, they might possibly take so long a space to pass through the first, and by that means have time enough, under

* Many have questioned whether civilized states are possessed of more virtue than those to which we give the name of *barbarous*. There are at least more exceptions to the common opinion than the Caledonians. Tacitus ascribes to the old rude Germans all the virtues which Ofsian ascribes to his heroes, who were originally the same people, and had the same customs, religion, and laws. "The morals of that people (says that historian) exceed the best laws devised by other nations;" Germ. c. 19. Raynal gives the same character to the tribes of Canada, rude and unpolished as they seemed. "They were (says he) obliging, disinterested, serious, fond of independence, benevolent, and humane. They discovered their benevolence by taking great care of widows, orphans, and infirm people; and by sharing their provisions with the unfortunate and distressed. They shewed their hospitality by keeping open, by day and night, their huts and tables,

to travellers and strangers, &c." And, with regard to their poetry, the same author says, that "their soul expressed what their eyes saw; that their language painted natural objects in strong colouring; that the boldest metaphors were familiar to them in common conversation, and that their public speeches were full of images, energy, and pathos." The excellency of this people's morals was probably owing in a great measure to their love of poetry; for their historian particularly remarks, that they were fond of songs. The darkest and most gloomy vices of the soul are quite inconsistent with a high relish for poetry and music. Hence the nicest observers of human nature have remarked, that from souls of this refined cast nothing unfair or cruel is to be dreaded; but that, on the contrary,

The man who has not music in himself,
And is not mov'd with concord of sweet sound,
Is fit for treason, stratagem, and spoils.

SHAKESPEAR.

under their peculiar advantages, to form their morals. If we suppose the mountains stocked but with a fifth or tenth of the animals which they now support, they would afford ample provision for the consumers, who do not seem to have been numerous, and who were always thinned by war, and by colonies to the adjacent Hebrides, and to the most contiguous parts of Ireland.—Here, then, was little room for quarrels or feuds; which would not, in any event, find a ready entrance among a tribe distinct from all others, closely allied among themselves, and, as always happens in such cases, strong in their attachments, and even violent in their friendships. It is only when society advances, and the numbers and wants of men grow many, that their interests begin to jostle and interfere, so as to kindle, and by their collision bring to light, a thousand vices till then unknown. The Caledonians were still farther removed from these extravagancies, by confining their desires within narrow bounds, and being contented with only the necessaries of life*. Whenever these began to fail in this mountain or valley, it was but shifting to the next, which was covered with plenty. Strabo tells us, that the Britons, in general, removed from one place to another; and the remains of old buildings, and the names of places, in all corners of the Highlands, prove this to have been the manner of Fingal.

THIS method of procuring subsistence, at the very easy expence
of

* These were greatly reduced by their eating only once a-day. In Galic our names for *breakfast*, *dinner*, and *supper*, are quite modern and exotic. *Lón*, or “daily meal,” supplied till of late the place of all the three. That the same was the case with some other ancient nations, appears from the saying of the citizen of Abdera, who “thanked the gods that Xerxes and his army ate but one meal a-day.”

* Vid.

of a little amusement, had a benign aspect on every virtue; but was peculiarly favourable to that delicacy with which we find the tender sex always treated by Ossian's heroes. Unlike those tribes to whom they are sometimes unjustly compared, the ancient Caledonians had no lands to till, nor any rigorous services to impose upon their females. The only occupation, hunting, was the province and the pleasure of the men. So that nothing remained for the other sex, but "to weave the robe for their love."—We would allow female charms and female virtue that deference which they never fail to procure when properly exerted, and which make them capable of subduing even those who can subdue the elephant and the lion. But leaving these altogether out of the question, the reason just now mentioned, in concurrence especially with those taken notice of above, is sufficient to account for the delicacy with which the fair sex are treated by our Caledonian heroes. They who made this objection to the poems of Ossian, might observe it was not peculiar to this people. Many other nations called by the name of *barbarians* had the same esteem for their women. When Hannibal passed through Gaul to cross the Alps, it was an article in a treaty made with him, that if a Gaul offered any injury to a Carthaginian, he should be tried before the court of the Gaulish women. The Germans allowed their women the like privileges. And we find the Ælians and Pisans submitting their differences to a court of sixteen women. Such also was the veneration of the Ethiopians for their matrons, that, in the very heat of their quarrels, they laid down their arms if one of them but made her appearance*.

In

* Vid. Plut. de Mulier. Polyæn. Strat. less civilized than the Celts, held at that
 l. 7. Tacit. Hist. 4. 61. Pausan. Eliac. time the female sex in the highest regard.
 &c.—Even the Scandinavians, though Vid. Lord Kaims's Sketches.

In Britain, in particular, as we are told by Tacitus and others, women were held in such honour, at that time, as to be often intrusted with the reins of government, and even with the command of armies. And there are instances on record, which shew they were not unworthy of so much confidence †.

SIMPLE as the age of Fingal was, there are many reasons that may induce us to think, that the Caledonians were, long before his time, a people; and that the contemplative Druids had space enough to form a system of morals, as well as the Bards to improve their poetry.—How early Britain was inhabited after the deluge or dispersion, cannot be easily ascertained; but we may suppose it happened in a very few centuries. Those nations that moved westward, confined by the Mediterranean on the left, and by the Hyperborean colds on the right, keeping clear of woods and morasses, and scorning the toils and cares of tillage and pasturage, while the tract before them allured them with the promise of sustenance by the amusement of hunting, would thus arrive with a pretty rapid progress in these countries †. The inhabitants of the south of Britain carried on a tin trade with very distant nations, according to *Sammes* and others, before the time of the Trojan war;

P

and

‡ When these were the manners of the South-Britons, Fingal's predecessors, who had assisted them as commanders in chief of the Caledonian forces when invaded by the Romans, had opportunity enough to learn from them, if we suppose that before then they fell short of them. And the manners of the better sort are always a law to their inferiors; so that their people, who were continually about their person, might all learn of Fingal

or Trathal.

† Neither the strait of the Hellespont, or even of Dover, would be such an obstacle as we are apt to imagine. A few rafts might easily transport such as did not value their lives too much to make the experiment; if we suppose the children of those who built Babel had so soon lost all the arts of their forefathers, as not to be able to join together a few planks.

* See

and were so ancient a people in the times of Cæsar and Diodorus, that they had lost all tradition of their origin; infomuch, that these authors supposed them to have been "a creation by themselves." And we may believe, that no part of the island would apply itself to agriculture or commerce, while another part of it could give subsistence only for amusement.

THERE are in the Highlands many monuments that shew their populoufness and power in an æra long prior to that of Fingal. Of these are especially the cairns or mounts of stones raised over the ashes of their great men; the number of whom, and the flourishing state of the country, we may conjecture, not only from the multiplicity of these, but also from their size, and from the immense distance from which the materials were sometimes carried. By a strange revolution, however, which only a long course of ages could have brought about, this ceremony, from being a mark of distinction, was converted by the Druids, long before the time of Fingal, to a punishment on the most infamous criminals. The remains of several vitrified towers still to be seen in the Highlands, seem to prove, that the inhabitants of these countries enjoyed even the comforts of life in a period more remote than the age of Fingal, or the invasion of the Romans, as no such mode of architecture has been since practised *. The vestiges of many other buildings too, though not vitrified, seem to claim an equal antiquity, both from their names and appearances. Walls half sunk in earth, their stones half mouldered into dust, and the very rocks on which they stood often half consumed by the encroachments of another element, are "tales of other years" indeed. These and various o-
ther

* See Williams on vitrified ruins.

other reasons have induced several searchers into antiquity to think that barbarism and civility had run their circle more than once in these countries; which appear to have been in a flourishing condition long before they had sunk into that dark night from which they are but still emerging*.

MANY other reasons might be assigned for the excellency of the poetry and morals ascribed to the æra of Ossian; but as this head has been pursued too far already, we shall only sum up the argument, and proceed to the next capital objection.—It has been ob-

P 2

served,

* Against these arguments for the antiquity of the Caledonians even in the time of Fingal, it is no sufficient objection that they were still ignorant of agriculture, destitute of riches, and not acquainted with many arts or sciences. Instances of the like nature may be found in history. Attica must have been many ages inhabited, before Ceres, much about the reign of David, brought thither the art of sowing corn. The Scythians and Spartans had the same sovereign contempt for silver and gold; and the ancient Gauls, who were the same people, and had the same language and religion, with the first inhabitants of Britain, made no other use of these metals than to throw them into the Massilian lake, as the most acceptable service they could do the gods. As to arts, the Caledonians, like many other ancient nations, lived in such contented simplicity, that they thought but few of them necessary. These few, however, seem to have reached a maturity that we are not aware of. The working of iron they understood

well: at least their arms, the only thing for which they needed the forge, seem to have been well tempered. Their robes, so often compared to the "bow of the shower," shew they understood, not only the manufacturing of cloaths; but could also give them a variety of tints, for which their rocks and vegetables supplied them, as they still do, with materials. Their ships, in which they performed such long and dangerous voyages, must have been well built and of a considerable size. And the remains of their vitrified houses shew they were no strangers to the art of lodging themselves comfortably, when the inclemency of the season required it. Their musical instruments need scarce be mentioned, it being allowed they were pretty simple, as were also their litters, or chariots of war.—Such as think it absurd to ascribe chariots of war to the age and country of Ossian, may consult Pomponius Mela, (l. 3.) who tells that the Britons in general fought in such cars and chariots.

† To

served, that if any art could be said to have been cultivated with all possible care by the Caledonians, it was poetry. This, besides the predilection of all states in its favours, enjoyed, among them, peculiar advantages. Their manner of life was extremely favourable to it; as was also that age of society in which they lived. Their language, original and strong †, was also capable of every inflexion and modulation, and peculiarly adapted to express every passion, and to suit every strain, whether sublime or tender. The education of the bards, under such masters as the Druids, was highly advantageous to them. Themselves, too, an order of such importance to the public, were chosen from the best families and most promising geniuses. And whatever talents they had, they wanted no spur to exert. For their own honour and respect, with the virtues of the community, depended, in a great measure, on their diligence and success. To facilitate this success, they were furnished not only with the fruits of their own long study and observation, but also with the composition of all the generations before them, since ever “the light of the song” had first dawned; as they had always a standing order or college of poets to preserve them and add to them. They had the advantage of one another’s conversation, which would excite their emulation, and make them aspire

† To what has been remarked on this particular in a former note, (p. 90.) we may add, that Plato (in *Cratyl.*) makes that difference between the language of the gods and that of men, which Homer also speaks of, consist entirely in the one’s being original and expressive of the thing signified, while the other is in a great measure arbitrary and compounded. That philosopher further observes, that more of this originality, or correspondence between the object and the name, was to be found in the language of the barbarians, than in the Greek tongue. The same notion seems to be applicable to the language of Adam in paradise, from *Gen. ii. 19.*, a passage which Plato might probably have seen.

aspire to eminence. They were always present, and generally engaged in every grand scene that was transacted; which could not fail to inspire their muse with the truest and noblest kind of fire. Their mind too, besides being conversant with a people of well-formed morals at home, was opened and expanded by their frequent intercourse with other nations around them, who were long before then civilized by their commerce with foreigners, and with whom the Caledonians had the advantage of conversing in their own language.—Now, when all these favourable circumstances, and many more, concurred with a first-rate genius, as in the case of Ossian, what wonder if they produced a very celebrated poet?—To think that the only avenue to knowledge, or the only cultivation of the mind, is by books, (though the Druids and their disciples might not want these neither), is a narrow and a wrong way of thinking. Conversation, action, and example, open and expand it much more powerfully. To hear, to converse, and to vie with Ullin, Alpin, Carril, and Ryno, would be of more avail to Ossian than a thousand volumes. For which reason geniuses have been observed to appear generally in clusters, or constellations. It has been the opinion of some, that books and dead study rather cramp and confine a great genius than improve it. Be this as it will, it is certain, that most of those poets who have made the greatest figure were, like Homer, Shakespear, and Ossian, for the most part indebted for it to a native fire and enthusiasm of genius, to which, perhaps, the learning of the schools and the precepts of Aristotle would have done little service. Poetic talents are entirely the gift of that universal mother Nature, who is not so partial to her children as some are apt to suspect her. Trojans or Rutilians,

north

north the Tweed or south of it, are distinctions unknown to her in the distribution of her favours. On both sides this river and that mountain, they are equally her children. She touches alike the lyre of Homer and the harp of Ossian; and equally inspires the ode of the Laplander, and the love-song of the Arcadian.

2. We now proceed to those causes to which we owe, for so many ages, the preservation of Ossian. Of these, the institution of the Bards deserves our first notice. In a country, the only one perhaps in the world, in which there was always, from the earliest period to almost the present age, a standing order of poets, we can not reasonably be surprised, either at finding excellent poems composed, or, after being composed, carefully preserved from oblivion. A great part of the business of this order was to watch over the poems of Ossian. In every family of distinction, there was at least one principal bard, and always a number of disciples, who vied with each other in having these poems in the greatest perfection; so that if a line was added, altered, or left out, another would not fail to shew his zeal and superiority, by correcting him. They had likewise frequent opportunities, in attending their chiefs to other families, of meeting in crowds and rehearsing these poems, which, at home or abroad, were night and day their employment. —Should the institution of the bards last for ever, the poems of Ossian could never perish.

NOR were they only the bards of great families who were here concerned. The vassal, equally fond of the song with his superior, entertained himself in the same manner; and all, under his influence, by contributing to his amusement in this way, were sure of obtaining his favour. This, with a life free from care, a spirit unbroken,

broken by labour, and a space of time unoccupied by any other employment or diversion, contributed to render the Highlanders a nation of singers and poets. From the recital of a variety of compositions, they would naturally be led to make comparisons of their merit. This would form their taste better than all the rules of the critics. The consequence of this taste would be a predilection in favour of the poems of Ossian; the superior merit of which was sufficient to procure them immortality from a people less addicted to the tale and the song than were the Highlanders of past ages.

EVERY reason indeed, private or public, that can be supposed, helped to preserve these remains of antiquity. They inspired such a brave and martial spirit, such love to the country, and such fidelity to the chief, as made it much the interest of the chieftains, or body-politic, to preserve them. For this reason, probably, no less than for their entertainment, were they led to keep a family-bard. To the poems of Ossian we may attribute a good share of that martial spirit and enthusiasm for war, till of late, so remarkable in the Highlands. This spirit flourished with the poems of Ossian; and, in a great measure, it also died with them.

It was likewise the interest of the religious to preserve these compositions. They well knew how nearly the morality of any people is connected with the songs which they are continually repeating. The human heart, they knew, must always draw a tincture from those ideas which it is not only much conversant with, but which come also recommended with the united charms of music and poetry. To this it is owing, that, in all religions, singing the praises of superior beings, or of the Supreme, made a considerable

able part of the worship; in hopes that the mind, by the contemplation of such perfections, might naturally be led to their imitation. And on the same principle, poems or songs that breathed such sentiments of justice, generosity, humanity, and every great and amiable virtue, deserved no less, from the preachers of the noblest morality, than to be encouraged and regarded. They were too wise to do otherwise; especially as the mythology of these poems laid a proper foundation for such superstructures as those priests were sometimes fond of building. One should rather think they would be disposed to add some things to the poems of Ossian, than to take any thing away from them. But such a number of bards as guarded them, made it impossible to do the one or the other. How narrowly these looked after them in this respect, no other proof need be required than their having in them so little appearance of religion; unless we allow that name to the notions of a future state, of which they are so full.—To the objection, That no other religious ideas occur in Ossian, it has been justly replied by his translator and others, That it was never the manner of the bards to interlard their poetry with religion. Anciently, religion was the province of the Druids; who made it one of their first tenets, to conceal the greatest part of it from all who were not initiated into their own order, of whose privileges they were remarkably jealous. Several allusions, however, to the Druidical notions might be pointed out in the original of these poems, though they are generally overlooked, as they are now so long used in their current meaning, that scarce any body adverts they are metaphors; although the etymology shews they had once a different accepta-

ception*.—At the time likewise in which these poems were composed, the old religion had retired to the shades; and there were strong reasons why the descendant of a family which it had endeavoured to depress, should not go much out of his way to inquire for it. The new religion, on the other hand, did not then make its appearance; or did not venture to do it very openly. To caves, rocks, and such sequestered places, it did as yet confine itself. Even still the Highland poets meddle but seldom and sparingly with religion; which is perhaps no little sign of a good judgment, as it is certain the true religion does not so easily tally with fiction, nor so well become it, as the mythology of the heathen poets.—Religion, however, is so natural to the mind of man, that it rather argues the poems in question to be genuine, that they have so little of it. Those real and particular causes which have been observed to operate at the time, were alone able to keep them so clear of it. But to return.

As it was the interest of the churchmen and chieftains to preserve the poems of Ossian, it was also the concern of the vulgar. Every clan boasted its descent from some or other of the heroes whom these poems celebrate; and this was enough to recommend them, although the poetry had not been so excellent. Their being likewise so often addressed to some "son of the rock," by whom was understood either the tutelar saint of the place, or some of the first missionaries of Christianity, never failed, till men grew more indifferent about religion, to procure them the highest veneration.—We may also observe, that every hill and dale they walked over was classic ground. They felt an enthusiasm which antiquaries need

Q

not

* See note on the word *La bhrath*, in the poem of Dermid.

not be told of, when they trod it. Every mountain, rock, and river, around them, were immortalized in song. This song the very sight of these objects would forcibly suggest; and every one would naturally hum it, as he walked along.—All the proverbs and customs to which these poems gave rise, would operate in the same manner, whenever they were heard. The son would ask what they meant; and the father with pleasure would tell him.

ON this head we may also observe, that the Highlanders being always a distinct and unsubdued people, contributed greatly to preserve their customs, traditions, and poems. Their southern neighbours sometimes pressed on them from the one side, and the Danes often harassed them on the other: but still they kept possession of their mountains; and, like a bow that has been held bent only by force, took the first opportunity of recovering their former situation.—And as the country in general, so every particular part of it had its fixed inhabitants. The same clan, from one generation to another, lived in the same valley, and became almost as much a part of it as the stream that watered it. This would produce an uncommon attachment to the place, and to the ancient song that spoke of it; which would, on all occasions, make a part in their entertainment. How generally these poems were repeated, is manifest from the unfluctuated state in which the Gaelic language has remained since the æra of their composition. They always formed a standard, with which all ranks of people, in all parts of the country, were familiar; and from which, while it was so well known, their style could never greatly deviate. Hence a Highlander still understands almost every line in the poems of Ossian: whereas in Ireland, where the inhabitants did not remain so unmixed, and
where

where this standard was not so generally attended to, the same language has undergone so considerable a change as to seem now rather a different tongue from the Scots Galic, and from these poems, than a different dialect *.

3. HAVING assigned so many causes for the preservation of the poems of Ossian, whilst these causes operated; we now proceed to account for their being, in a great measure, lost so suddenly.

THAT we have not the whole of the poems of Ossian, or even of the collection translated by Mr Macpherson, we allow. Yet still we have many of them; and of almost all a part. The building is not entire; but we have still the grand ruins of it.

WITHIN a century back, the Highlands of Scotland have undergone a greater revolution than for ten before that period. With a quicker pace the feudal system vanished; property fluctuated; new laws and new customs stepped in, and supplanted the old; and all this with such sudden and such violent convulsions, as may well account for the shaking of a fabric, which before seemed to defy the tooth of time, and stood the wonder and delight of ages. Even since Mr Macpherson gathered his collection, the amusements, employments, and taste, of the Highlanders, are much altered. A

Q 2

greater

* This observation is likewise no inconsiderable argument for the antiquity and authenticity of these poems. That the Galic language, spoken in districts so distant and distinct, separated by so many seas, mountains, heaths, and forests, and having little or no commerce or communication with each other, should, notwithstanding all this, remain for fifteen hundred years so little corrupted or varied as to appear still like the language of almost one family, is difficult to account for on any other supposition than that of their having all one common standard. Every body knows how fast the English language fluctuated till such a standard was formed by the translation of the scriptures.

greater attention to commerce, agriculture, and pasturage, has quite engrossed that partial regard which was paid, even then, to the song of the bard. In twenty years hence, if manners continue to change so fast as they do at present, the faintest traces shall scarce be found of our ancient tales and poems. “ Offian himself is the last of his race, and he too shall soon be no more ; for his gray branches are already strewed on all the winds.”

AMONG the causes which make our ancient poems vanish so rapidly, poverty and the iron rod should, in most places, have a large share. From the baneful shade of these *murderers of the muse*, “ the light of the song ” must fast retire. No other reason needs be asked why the present Highlanders neglect so much the songs of their fathers.—Once the humble, but happy vassal, sat at his ease, at the foot of his grey rock or green tree. Few were his wants, and fewer still his cares ; for he beheld his herds sporting around him on his then unmeasured mountain. He hummed the careless song, and tuned his harp with joy, while his soul in silence blessed his chieftain—Now—I was going to draw the comparison ;

“ —sed Cynthia aurem

“ Vellit, et admonuit.”

It is with very different feelings that I mention, as another reason for the neglect of these and other ancient traditions, the growth of industry, which fills up all the blanks of time to better advantage ; and especially the increase of more useful knowledge, owing much to the benevolent and Christian scheme of the honourable society who have this for their object. This has discovered a richer quarry to the busy and inquisitive minds of our youth, and taught

taught them to spend their idle time to a far more valuable purpose than was done by their forefathers.

ABOVE all, the extinction of the order of the bards hastened the catastrophe of Ossian's poems. In a single family only has any of this order been retained since the beginning of this century, and the last in that family came down to our times in a very advanced life *. His favourite songs are said to have been the poems of Ossian. When age was coming on, memory beginning to fail, and no successor like to appear, he had so many of them as he most admired committed to writing. By a happy coincidence, Mr Macpherson overtook this bard, and got his treasure. This fact, with the *red book* formerly mentioned, and some other MSS, accounts for his having found these poems in greater number and perfection than they could ever since be met with. Were there any inducement, however, adequate to the labour and expence of a careful search, the best, though not perhaps the largest, part might still be found. Yet this, it is probable, would not produce, in resolved sceptics, any more conviction than the many remains already shewn. Those gentlemen, therefore, who take pains to satisfy them in this manner, might as well give them up with a smile, as the people of Iona did the man who would not believe that ever they had, in that remote country, any cathedral; for this good reason, because he could see nothing but the ruins of a building, which, for ought he knew, he said, might never have had a roof upon it.

BUT we suppose enough has been said to convince the unprejudiced of the authenticity of Ossian. As to the opposite class, since there

* Macvurich, bard to Clanronald.

there is no reasoning with such, we shall now take leave of them, persuaded they can do the Celtic bard no real prejudice. We consider him in the light of that good-natured Indian king, who desired his servants, when they were driving away the flies that buzzed about his ears, to let them alone: as they were but creatures of a day, it was cruel, he said, to deny them their short pastime; adding, that if they amused themselves, they gave little concern to to him, since he knew their fate would soon rid him of their trouble.

HAVING said so much for the authenticity of the poems translated by Mr Macpherson, it may be proper now to give some account of the few that follow. Early struck with the beauty of some of them in the original, and finding that they had escaped the inquiries of the able and ingenious translator of Ossian, whose researches were chiefly confined to the more northern parts of the Highlands, I began to collect them for my own amusement. Beyond this I had no further view, till the translation of two short fragments, at the desire of some gentlemen who composed a Galic society in Glasgow, were given to the Messrs Foulis of that place, and printed by them about ten years ago, accompanied with a recommendation to the translator to pursue the inquiry. A few other pieces of them happened to fall into the hands of a lady of distinguished taste, who shewed them, partly in the translation, and partly in the original, to several judges of poetry in both the languages, who wished to preserve as many as could be got of them from sinking into oblivion.—By these circumstances, in a great measure

measure accidental, I was induced to bestow more attention upon collecting as much as I possibly could of the ancient Galic poetry. In this task, however, I engaged with very moderate hopes of success. The more westerly part of the Highlands and Isles, the only corner of the field which had not formerly been reaped, did not promise any thing of a rich harvest. Upon examining, however, into the more inland and mountainous parts of the country, many pieces were found of no inconsiderable merit, though few of them were either entire or uncorrupted. What seemed in this case the most natural expedient, was to collect, from different quarters, as many editions as possible, in order to supply the defects, or rectify the mistakes of one by the help of another. This, for several years, was my object, in which I was happily seconded by my situation; having resided for a considerable time in various parts of the West Highlands, particularly on the estates of Argyle and Breadalbine in that country; where a mountainous situation, or a less rigorous exertion of power, afforded some shelter to the Galic muse, after she had been hunted from most other places which she had been used to frequent.

It might now be proper, for the satisfaction of the public, to mention every person who furnished a single fragment of these poems. Had the expediency of this been earlier attended to, the list, though long, should have been given complete; which cannot now be done, by mere recollection, after ten or twelve years have elapsed. The principal contributors, however, can easily be enumerated: and though it may be of little consequence to the public to be presented with the names of persons who can be known only to a very few of them, yet in order to satisfy them so far as can be

ex-

expected from a translator, I have set down as many of their names below as will, I hope, be reckoned sufficient *.

AFTER the materials were collected, the next labour was to compare the different editions; to strike off several parts that were manifestly spurious; to bring together some episodes that appeared to have a relation to one another, though repeated separately; and to restore to their proper places some incidents that seemed to have run from one poem into another. In this I proceeded with all the care and fidelity due to such a work. The most material of the alterations or transpositions which I have made, are taken notice of in the notes annexed to their respective poems, and it would be superfluous here to repeat them. It might be equally unnecessary, if candour did not require it, to mention the unavoidable necessity of throwing in sometimes a few lines or sentences (as remarked in the notes) to join some of these episodes together, and to lead the reader through a breach, which must have otherwise remained a hiatus. All these are liberties which necessity, in this case, enjoined, and which the laws of criticism, I hope, will allow. If any apolo-

* The persons from whom I had the most, by oral recitation, were Duncan (*rioch*) M'Nicol in Glenorchay, John M'Nicol near Tyndrum, John M'Phail in Lorn, Peter M'Dougal at Lochowfide, Malcolm M'Lerran near Kilmartine, Charles M'Alester near Tarbert of Kintire, and Hugh Johnson in Knapdale. Among the correspondents who were most active and successful in procuring me several pieces from persons and places that I could have no intercourse with myself, were Messrs Alexander M'Nicol in Sococh, Alexander M'Nab near Dalma-ly in Glenorchay, and Donald Smith

under-surgeon in the 42d regiment. I had some pieces from the reverend Mr M'Diarmid of Wemyss, then residing in the isle of Mull, and some from a MS. collection belonging to the reverend Mr M'Diarmid in Glasgow; but have been in a special manner obliged to Mr Kennedy, schoolmaster in Kilmelford, for the use of a large collection, which, with a view of publishing, he had gathered with great industry through many parts of the West Highlands and Isles.—These were some of the principal sources from which the following remains of ancient Galic poetry have been derived.

apology, however, be requisite for these freedoms, I can add, that I have been for the most part guided in my conjectures, and even supplied in my additions, by the traditional tales or *sgéulachds*, which always accompany and explain the old Galic poems, and which often remain entire, when the poems themselves are reduced to fragments*. Where these tales did not throw some ray of light I have been always scrupulous to venture far, and have therefore left several breaches open; considering, that when there was no other way of supplying them but from fancy, any other person had as much right to do that as I had. Sparing, however, as I have been of making any alterations which were not necessary, and warranted by some of the various readings or by the tales, I am sensible the form of the poems is considerably altered from what is found in any single one of the editions from which they are compiled. They have assumed somewhat more of the appearance of regularity and art, than they have in that shape in which they are generally to be met with. The reason of this, which has just now been given,

R

will,

* The style of these tales is highly figurative and poetical; and the words and ideas so well arranged, that they take the most lasting hold of the memory and imagination; inasmuch, that they are frequently to be met with where the poems are beginning to be rare.

As the length of some of Ossian's poems has been made an objection to their being preserved by oral tradition, it must appear still more strange, to such as are unacquainted with the contexture of these compositions, and with the ancient customs of the Highlanders, that prosaic tales should be preserved in the same

manner. Such, however, is the fact. "The extreme length of these pieces," says Mr Macpherson, "is very surprising, some of them requiring many days to repeat them. But such hold do they take of the memory, that few circumstances are ever omitted by those who have received them only from oral tradition: what is still more surprising, the very language of the bards is still preserved." Note on Cath-loda, Duan first.

Sir W. Temple, who may be less suspected of partiality, has long ago given the very same account of Irish tales. Temple's Miscel. vol. ii. p. 341.

will, it is hoped, be sustained as sufficient by such as might perhaps be better pleased if they were presented to them in that bold and irregular manner in which they have been long accustomed to hear them. From the long and general satisfaction which they have given in that shape, it is presumed that they have in them some natural aptness to please the mind of man, and may still afford some entertainment to the candid, who have a taste for such compositions, and who look not for that perfection which is seldom or never to be found.

MOST of the following poems bear the name of Ossian; who, for some ages back, has engrossed the merit of almost all the ancient Galic poetry, as he had certainly a title to the best of it. Some, which bear evidence of their not being his, are remarked as belonging to some other poet. Other parts, that seemed to me only imitations, I have taken no notice of, as I could not absolutely venture to reprobate them.

I HAVE inserted, occasionally, as many specimens of the original as I could presume upon, without fear of incurring the censure of the bulk of readers, who may not understand their beauty, which, often, could not be conveyed into an English translation. But should it be thought, contrary to what I apprehend, that I have given too few, I shall willingly take the first opportunity that may offer of producing more of them. As I have made so many remarks on these poems in the course of the notes upon them, it is unnecessary here to say any thing further concerning them. To weigh their merit is not my province, but that of the public, to whose judgment I submit them, and in whose decision I shall acquiesce with the most respectful silence.

A

A
C O L L E C T I O N
O F
A N C I E N T P O E M S,
TRANSLATED FROM THE
G A L L I C.

D A R G O:

A P O E M*.

THE A R G U M E N T.

COMHAL, sailing to Innisfail, lands on a desert isle through night. Here he meets with Dargo, who was supposed to have been lost on their return from a former expedition. To comfort Dargo, who had got some intimation of the death of his spouse Crimora, Ullin introduces the episode of Colda and Minvela. Arriving at Innisfail in the morning, they engage Armor, a chief of Lochlin, who falls in battle.—Crimoina, who had followed Armor in disguise, is discovered at night mourning over his grave, and carried to the hall of Innisfail, where Ullin, to divert her grief, relates the story of Morglan and Minona. The next day, Comhal proposes to send her home; but, on her choosing to live in Morven, she is brought there, and becomes the second wife of Dargo.

Some time after this, Connan, at a hunting party, suggesting some doubts of Crimoina's attachment to them, as they were at variance with her people, proposes to make trial of her love by staining Dargo with the blood of a wild boar which they had killed, and carrying him home as dead. Crimoina was so affected with the supposed death of her husband, that, after having sung his elegy to the harp, she suddenly expired beside him.

P A R T I.

SEE! Dargo rests beneath his lonely tree, and listens to the breeze in its rustling leaf. The ghost of Crimoina rises on the blue lake below: the deer see it, and stalk, without fear, on the

* This poem, which goes under the name of *Dan an Deirg*, has been in such estimation as to pass into a proverb; *Gach dan gu dan an Deirg*.

Perhaps it owes much of the regard paid it, to that tender and plaintive, tho' simple, air to which it is still sung. There are few who have any at all of Ossian's poems,

the upland rock. No hunter, when the sign is seen, disturbs their peace; for the soul of Dargo is sad, and the swift-bounding companion of his chace howls beside him.—I also feel thy grief at my heart, O Dargo; my tears tremble as dew on the grass, when I remember thy woful tale.

COMHAL sat on that rock, where now the deer graze on his tomb. The mark of his bed are three gray stones and a leafless oak; they are mantled over with the moss of years. His warriors rested around the chief. Leaning forward on their shields, they listened to the voice of the song. Their faces are sidelong turned; and their eyes, at times, are shut. The bard praised the deeds of the king, when his blasting sword and the spear of Innisfail † rolled before them, like a wreath of foam, the battle.

THE song ceased; but its sound was still in our ear, as the
voice

poems, but can repeat, at least, some part of Dargo.

As the narration of this poem, however, is put for the most part in the mouth of Ullin, and as the transactions of it suit his time better than Ossian's, who, if then born, must have been very young, we may suppose *Dan an Deirg* to have been the composition of Ullin. Of this hoary and venerable bard, Ossian always speaks with reverence, and ascribes to him many episodes in his larger poems.

† As the names of Lochlin, Erin, and Innisfail, often occur in this and some of the other poems that follow, it may be proper to remember, that by *Lochlin* is meant Norway, or Scandinavia in general; by *Erin*, Ireland; and by *Innisfail*, a part of the same country inhabited by the

Falans. Sometimes *Innisfail* seems to denote some of the Hebrides; and *Innisfere* stands always for the Orkneys; or at least the greatest part of them.—It may be also proper to observe the footing on which the kings of Morven or Caledonia were with these neighbouring countries. With the inhabitants of *Innisfail* and *Innisfere*, they generally lived on good terms; and seem to have been their superiors. With the legal sovereigns of *Erin* and their people they were nearly allied; and frequently assisted them against the usurpations of the Firbolg, and the incursions of the Scandinavians. With their southern neighbours, beyond the friths of Forth and Clyde, the kings of Morven seem to have had very little friendly intercourse.

voice of the gale when its course is past. Our eyes were turned to the sea. On the distant wave arose a cloud. We knew the skiff of Innisfail. On its masts we saw the Cran-tara* hung. "Spread," said Comhal, "the white wings of my sails. On the waves we fly to help our friends."

NIGHT met us, with its shades, on the deep. Waves lifted before us their white breasts, and in our sails was the roar of winds.

"THE night of storms is dark; but a desert isle is nigh. It spreads its arms like my bow when bent, and its bosom, like the breast of my love, is calm. There let us wait the light; it is the place where mariners dream of dangers that are over."

OUR course is to the bay of Botha. The bird of night howled above us from its grey rock. A mournful voice welcomed its full-laden note from a cave. "It is the ghost of Dargo†," said Comhal; "Dargo, whom we lost returning from Lochlin's wars."

WAVES lifted their white heads among the clouds. Blue mountains rose between us and the shore. Dargo climbed the mast to look for Morven; but Morven he saw no more. The thong broke in his hand; and the waves, with all their foam, leapt over his red wandering hair. The fury of the blast drove our sails, and we lost sight of the chief. We raised the song of grief in his praise,

* The Cran-tara means in general a signal of distress. It was properly a piece of wood half-burnt, and dipt in blood, which was conveyed with all possible expedition from one hamlet to another in cases of imminent danger. The *Cran-tara* signifies the "beam of gathering;" and the fire and blood might intimate

either the danger apprehended from the invaders, or a threatening to such as did not immediately repair to the chieftain's standard.—The custom seems to have been common to other northern nations. See *Ol. Mag.* p. 146.

† *Dargo*, "red-haired;" *Comhal*, "mild brow."

praise, and bade the ghosts of his fathers convey him to the place of their rest.

BUT they heard us not, said Comhal; his ghost still haunts these dreary rocks. His course is not on sunny hills; on green mossy vales in Morven. Ye ghosts of woody Lochlin, who then pursued us in the storm; vain is your attempt, if you think to detain Dargo. Your numbers may be many, but you shall not prevail. Trenmor † shall come from Morven's clouds, and scatter, with his blast, your dim forms. Your curling mists, like the beard of the thistle of Ardven, shall fly before the ruler of the storm.—And thou, Dargo, shalt ride with him, on the skirt of his robe, and rejoice with the air-borne sons of thy people.—Raife, Ullin, the song, and praise his deeds: he will know thy voice, and rejoice in the sound of his fame. And if any of the ghosts of Lochlin are near, let them hear of the coming of Trenmor.

PEACE to thy soul, said Ullin, as he reared his voice; peace to thy soul, dweller of the caves of the rock; why so long in the land of strangers? Art thou forced to fight the battle of clouds with Lochlin's ghosts, alone; or do the thousand thongs of air confine thee? Often, O Dargo, didst thou contend with a whole host; and, still, thy ghost maintains the unequal combat. But Trenmor shall soon come, and lift the broad shield and airy blade in thine aid. He will pursue the troubled ghosts of Lochlin before him, like the withered leaf of Malmor's oak, when it is caught in the folds of the whirlwind.—Peace to thy soul, till then,

† *Trenmor*, "tall and mighty;" the great-grandfather of Fingal

then, O Dargo: and calm be thy rest, thou dweller of the rock,
in the land of strangers.

AND dost thou bid me remain on this rock, bard of Comhal;
will the warriors of Morven forsake their friend in the hour of
danger? cried Dargo, as he descended from the steep of his cliff.

GALCHOS knew the voice of Dargo, and made the glad reply
he was wont when called to the chace; the chace of the dun-
bounding fons of the desert. Quick, as an arrow in air, he
springs over waves. His feet are scarce bathed in the deep. He
leaps to the breast of Dargo.—The dim-twinkling stars looked,
through the parted clouds, on their meeting of joy. It was like
the embrace of friends, when they meet in the land of strangers,
after the flow years of absence.

How, said Comhal, is Dargo alive! How didst thou escape
ocean's floods, when they rolled their billows over thy head, and
hid thee in their foam?

THE waves, said Dargo, drove me to this rock, after toiling a
whole night in the stream. Seven times, since, has the moon
wasted its light and grown again: but seven years are not so long
on the brown heath of Morven. All the day I sat on that rock,
humming the songs of our bards; while I listened to the hoarse
sound of the waves, or the hoarser screams of the fowls that rode
on their top. And, in the night, I conversed with the ghosts and
the owl; or stole on the sea-fowl that slept on the beachy rock.—
Long, Comhal, was the time; for slow are the steps of the sun,
and scarce-moving is the moon that shines on this lonely place.—
But why these silent tears, what mean these pitying looks? They
are not for my tale of wo; they are for Crimora's death. I know
S she

she is not: for I saw her ghost, sailing on the low-skirted mist, that hung on the beams of the moon; when they glittered, through the thin shower, on the smooth face of the deep. I saw my love, but her face was pale. The briny drops were trickling down her yellow locks, as if from ocean's bosom she had rose. The dark course of the tears was on her cheek, like the marks of streams of old, when their floods overflowed the vale. I knew the form of Crimora. I guessed the fate of my love. I raised my voice, and invited her to my lonely rock. But the virgin-ghosts of Morven raised the faint song around the maid. It was like the dying fall of the breeze in the evening of autumn; when shadows slowly grow in Cona's vale, and soft sounds travel, through secret streams, in the gale of reeds. The listening waves, bending forward, stood still, and the screaming sea-fowl were quiet, while the tender air continued.

"COME," they said, "Crimora*, to Morven; come to the hills of woods; where Sulmalda, the beauteous love of Trenmor, bends the airy bow, and pursues the half-viewless deer of the clouds. Come, Crimora, and forget thy grief in the land of our joy."

SHE followed; but left me a pitying look, and I thought I heard her sigh. It was like the distant wave on the lonely shore, when the mariner hears its moan from the mouth of his cave, and fears the coming storm. Still I listened; but the soft music ceased: the fair vision vanished. It vanished like the hunter's dream of love, when the sound of the horn, on the heath, awakes him. I cried; but they heard me not. They left me to mourn on my solitary rock; like the dove which his mate hath forsaken.—Since that
time,

* *Crimora*, "large, or generous heart." *Sul-malda*, "mild-looking eye."

time, my tears have always begun with the dawn of the morning, and descended with the shades of the night.—O when shall I see thee again, Crimora! Tell me, Comhal, how died my love.

THY love heard of thy fate, and three suns beheld her white hand support her bending head. The fourth saw her steps on the winding shore, looking for the cold corse of Dargo. The daughters of Morven beheld her from their mountains. They descended, in silence, along their blue streams. Their sighs lift their wandering hair, their soft hands wipe away the dimming tear.—They came, in silence, to comfort Crimora; but in her bed of ooze, they found the maid. They found her cold as a wreath of snow; fair as a swan on the shore of Lano.—The gray stone and green turf on Morven's shore, now compose Crimora's dwelling.—The daughters of Morven mourned her fate, and the bards praised her beauty.—So may we, Dargo, live in renown; so may our fame be found, when we moulder in the narrow house!

—BUT see that light of Innisfail; see the Crantara fly? Danger is nigh the king. Spread the sail, and ply the oar; swift fly the bark over the sea. Let our speed be to yonder shore, that we may scatter the foes of Innisfail.

THE breeze of Morven comes to our aid. It fills the wide womb of our sails with its breath. Our mariners rise on their oars, and lash the foaming waves on their gray-bending head. Each hero looks forward to the shore! each soul is already in the field.—But the eye of Dargo is bent downwards, as he sits in the silence of his grief. His head rests on his arm, over the dark edge of his father's shield. Comhal observes the mournful chief; he observes his tears, dim-wandering, through the bosky plain of his

shield; and he turns his eye on Ullin, that he may gladden his soul with the song.

“COLD A † lived in the days of Trenmor. He pursued the deer round Etha's bay. The woody banks echoed to his cry, and the branchy fons of the mountain fell. Minvela saw him from the other side. She would cross the bay in her bounding skiff. A blast from the land of the strangers came. It turned the boat on the stormy deep. Minvela rose on its back. Colda heard her cries.—‘I die,’ she said, ‘Colda! my Colda, help me!’

“NIGHT drew its mantle over the wave. Fainter her voice founded in his ear; fainter it echoed from the shelving banks. Like the distant sound of evening streams, it died at length away, and sunk in night.—With morning he found her on the founding beach. Her blood was mixt with the oozy foam.—He raised her gray stone on the shore, nigh a spreading oak and murmuring brook. The hunter knows the place, and often rests in the shade when the beams of the sun scorch the plain with the noon-day heat.

† The episode of Colda is often repeated by itself, but the circumstances of the poem leave no room to doubt of its proper place being here. As it is beautiful, and not long, I take the liberty of inserting it for the sake of the Galic reader.

Ri linn Threimhoir nan sgia
Rusig Caoilte am fà' mu Eite;
Thuit leis daimh chabrach nan cnoc,
'Scho-fhreagair gach flocd da eigha
Channaic Min-bheul a gaol,
'S le curach faoin chaidh na dhaik
Sheid ois choimheach gun bhaigh,
'S chuir i druim an aird air a barca.
Chualas le Caoilte a glaoth
“A Ghaoil, a Ghaeil, dean mo cho'nadh.”

Ach thuirling dall-bhrat na h oidhche
'S dh'fhailnich a caoi-chora'.
Mar fhuaim futhain ann cois,
Rainig a h eigh ga chluasan,
'S air madainn ann ou'adh na tragha
Fhuaras gun chait an og-bhean.

Thog e'n 'n cois tragha a leachd
Aig futhan broin nan glas-gheugan;
'S iul don t Sealgair an t alte,
Smor a bhaigh ris ann teas na greine.

'S bu chian do Chaoilte ri bron
Feadh an lo, ann coiltreach Eite,
'S fad na h oidhche chluinate a leon;
Chuireadh e air cois an uisge deisinn.
Ach bhuail Trenmor beum-fgeithe,
'S da ionfuidh, le buaidh, leann Caoilte;
Uigh air uigh phill a ghean,
Chual e chliu, 's leann e'n t feilge.

heat.—Colda long was sad. All day, through Etha's woody banks, he strayed alone. All night the listening sea-fowl, with his moan on the shore, were sad.—But the foe came, and the shield of Tremor was struck. Colda lifted the spear, and they were vanquished. His joy, by degrees, returned; like the sun, when the storm on the heath is past. He pursued again the brown deer of Etha, and heard his fame in the song of the bards."

I REMEMBER, said Dargo, the chief. Like the faint traces of a dream that is long since past, his memory travels across my soul. Often he led my infant steps to the stone on the banks of Etha. The tear, as he leaned on its gray moss, would fall from his grief-red eye: he would wipe it away with his snowy locks. When I would ask him why he wept?—"Yes," he would reply, "it is here Minvela sleeps." And when I would bid him cut me a bow; "It is," he would say, "the tomb of my love indeed. O let it be thy haunt, when thou shalt hereafter pursue the chase, and rest at noon till the warm beam is over!"—And often I did sit, O Colda, over her tomb and thine, while I gave thy fame to the mournful song. O that my renown, like thine, might survive, when I myself am high, on these clouds, with Crimora!

AND thy fame shall remain, said Comhal.—But see these shields, rolling like moons in mist. Their bosses glitter to the first gray beams of the morning. The people of Loehlin are there; and the walls of Innisfail tremble before them. The king looks out at his window; and, through the dimness of his tears, beholds a gray cloud. Two drops fall on the stone on which he leans; he perceives that our sails are the gray cloud. The tear of joy starts into his eye, "Comhal, he cries, is near!"

LOCH-

LOCHLIN too hath seen us, and bends his gathered host to meet us. Armor leads them on, tall above the rest, as the red stag that heads the herd of Morven. Against me he lifts that hand, from which I loosed the thongs on the shore of Erin. Let each, my friends, gird on his sword, and bound ashore on his spear. Let each remember the deeds of his former days, and the battles of Morven's heroes.—Dargo, spread thy broad shield: Carril, wave thy sword of light: Connal, shake thy spear, that often strewed the plain with dead: And, Ullin, raise thou the song, to spirit us on to battle *.

WE met the foe. But they stood, firm, as the oak of Malmor, that does not bend before the fury of the storm. Innisfail saw, and rushed from their walls to help us. Lochlin was then blasted before us, and its dry branches strewed in the course of the tempest. Armor met the chief of Innisfail; but the spear of the king fixed his thick shield to his breast. Lochlin, Morven, and Innisfail wept for the early fall of the chief; and his bard began the mournful song in his praise.

“Tall wert thou, Armor, as the oak on the plain: swift as the eagle's wing was thy speed; strong, as the blast of Loda, thy arm; and deadly, as Lego's mist †, thy blade! Early art thou gone to the airy hall: why, thou mighty, art thou fallen in youth? Who shall

* To sing the *Brosnacha-catha*, or “the incitement to war,” was part of the office of the bards.

† The lake of Lego in Ireland, and the lake of Lano in Scandinavia, have the same noxious quality ascribed to their vapours by the ancient bards. In this simile, some repeat the one, and some the

other. Lamo, in the mouth of a Scandinavian bard, might be more proper; but Lego seems to suit better with the verse, and makes the sound smoother.

Bha t airde mar dharaig 'sa ghleann.
Do lus's mar iolair nam beann gun gheilt;
Do spionna mar ofna' Lodda na fheirg,
'S do lann, mar cheo *Lige*, gun leighcas.

† The

shall tell thy aged father, that he has now no son; or who shall tell Crimoina that her love is dead?—I see thy father, bending beneath the load of years. His hand trembles on the pointless spear; and his head, with its few gray hairs, shakes like the aspen leaf. Every distant cloud deceives his dim eye, as he looks, in vain, for thy bounding ship. Joy, like a sun-beam on the blasted heath, travels over his face of age, as he cries to the children at their play, ‘I behold it coming.’ They turn their eye on the blue wave, and tell him they see but the sailing mist. He shakes, with a sigh, his gray head, and the cloud of his face is mournful.—I see Crimoina smiling in her morning dream. She thinks thou dost arrive in all thy stately beauty. Her lips, in half-formed words, hail thee in her dream, and her joyful arms are spread to clasp thee.—But, alas! Crimoina, thou only dreamest. Thy love is fallen. Never more shall he tread the shore of his native land. In the dust of Innisfail his beauty sleeps! Thou shalt awake from thy slumber to know it, Crimoina; but when shall Armor awake from his long sleep? When shall the heavy slumber of the tenant of the tomb be ended? When shall the sound of the horn awake him to the chace? When shall the noise of the shield awake him to the battle?—Children of the chace, Armor is asleep, wait not for his rising; for the voice of the morning shall never reach his dwelling: sons of the spear, the battle must be fought without him; for he is asleep, and no warning bos shall awake him.—Tall wert thou †, Armor, as the
oak

† The ancient bards frequently conclude their episodes with a repetition of the first stanza. Instead of this, however, many repeat here the following verses:

Beannachid air anam an laich
Bu gharg fraoch ri dol 's gach greis,
Ard Ri' Lo'icann, ceann an t sluagh,
'S iomad ruaig a chuire' leis.

“Peace to the soul of the hero whose
wrath

oak on the plain. Swift as the eagle's wing was thy speed: strong, as the blast of Loda *, thy arm; and deadly, as Lego's mist, thy blade."

THE bard ceased. The tomb of Armor was reared; and his people, with slow unequal steps, departed. Their nodding masts are heavy on the deep. Their songs are heard, at times; but their sound is mournful. They are like the sigh of mountain-winds in the waving grass of the tomb, when the night is dark and the vales are silent.

P A R T II.

THE tales of the years that are past, are beams of light to the soul of the bard. They are like sun-beams that travel over the heath of Morven; joy is in their course, though darkness dwells around.—Joy is in their course, but it is soon past; and the path of darkness, like the shadow of mist, pursues them. It will soon overtake them on the mountains, and the footsteps of the glad beams will cease to be seen. Thus the tale of Dargo travels over my soul, a beam of light, though the gathering of clouds is nigh it.—Shine on, O beam, as thou didst in the strife of Armor, when the strength

wrath in the strife of war was deadly. Peace to the people's chief, and to Lochlin's king; often did the vanquished fly before him."

* The Loda, or Lodda, of Ossian, is supposed to have been the same with the Odin or Woden of the Scandinavians.

This hero was more ancient than Homer; as his son Skiold was, according to the Danish chronologies, a thousand years older than Pompey. His many conquests and warlike exploits seem to have procured him divine honours from his countrymen, after his death.

strength of the bard was great, and his soul swelled, like Fingal's sail, in the storm of danger.

WE * turned in, that night, to the gray tower of Innisfail, and rejoiced in the song and the shell. The burst of grief, at times, reaches our ears. "Ullin and Sulma, examine whence it comes."

WE find Crimoina stretched on the grave of Armor.—When the battle had ceased, and her lover had fallen, she too had sunk in her secret place. All day, beneath the shade of a young oak she lay. At night, she made her bed on the grave of her love.—We gently tore her from her place, as our tears descended in silence. The grief of the virgin was great, and our words were uttered only in sighs.

WE brought her to the halls of Innisfail; and sorrow came, like a cloud, on every face. Ullin, at length, took the harp, and bade it give its tenderest air. Slow, solemn, and soft, his fingers steal along the trembling strings. The sound melts the soul. It calms the tumult of wo in the breast.

† "Who bends, he said, from his airy cloud! who pours the

T

piteous

* Upon the authority of the tale, a sentence or two are here thrown in to conduct the narration, as the verse is deficient.

† The smooth and elegiac strain of this episode, when set off with all the charms of music, could not fail to affect every person possessed of any sensibility of heart. For the sake of those who may understand the original, it is here subjoined.

Co so nurling on cheo!

Sa dortadh a leoin air a ghaoith?

O's domhain a chreuchd tha na chliabh;

'Sis doilleir am fiadh ud ra thaobh!

Sud taibhsé Mhorghlaim na mais'

Triath Sli'-ghlais nan ioma' fruth;

Thaisig e gu Mòrbheinn le ghaol

Inghéan Shora bu chaoine cruth.

Thog é sin e'ar a aonach gun bhaigh.

Min'onn dh'fhag e na tigh.

Thuirling éall-cheo le oidhche na nial.

Dh'eigh na fruthaibh;—shian na taibhsé.

Thug an og-bhean fuil ris an t slisbh,

S chunnacas le'a fiadh ro'n cheo:

Tharsuing i'n t sreang le rogha beachd:

Fhuaras an gath ann nchd an eigh!

Thiolaic sinn 'san tulaich an laoch,

Le gath is cuibhne na chaol-tigh.

B'aill le Min'onn luith fa' shoid;

Ach

piteous sigh on the wind! The dark wound is still in his breast, and the half-viewless deer is beside him? Who is it but the ghost of the fairest Morglan, king of the streamy Sliglas?—He came with the foe of Morven, and pursued the deer of our land. His love was with him; the fair-haired, white-handed, daughter of Sora. Morglan had gone to the hill: Minona staid in the booth. The thick mist descends. Night comes on, with all its clouds. The torrent roars in its fall. Ghosts shriek along its hollow-sounding course. Minona looks for her love. She half-espies a deer, slow-moving in the mountain mist. Her hand of snow is on the bow. She draws the string. The arrow flies. Oh! that it had erred farther from the mark. The deer is borne by her Morglan. The arrow is found in his youthful breast!

“WE reared the hero's tomb on the hill, and placed the arrow and the horn of the deer in his darkly silent house. There, too, his bounding dog was laid, to pursue the airy deer.—Minona would sleep with her love. But we sent her home to her land; where she, long, was sad. But her grief wasted away with the stream of years; and she now rejoices with Sora's maids, though, at times, her sighs are heard.—Who bends from his airy cloud? who pours his sigh on the wind? The dark wound is still in his breast, and the half-viewless deer is beside him.”

DAY came to Innisfail, with its gray-dark light. Take, Ullin, thy ship, said Comhal, and bring Crimoina to her land; that, in the midst of her friends, she may again rejoice, like the moon when

Ach phill i, le bron, da tìr.

Bu trom a tuirse, 's bu chlan:

Ach fruth bhliadnuidh chaith air falbh e.

Tha i 'nois fubhach le-oigh'ean Shora,

Mur chuinntear a bron air uairibh.—

Co se tairling, &c.

when it lifts its head through clouds and smiles on the valley of silence.

BLESSED, said Crimoina, be the chief of Morven, the friend of the feeble in the day of their danger!—But what should Crimoina do in her land; where every rock and hill, every tree and murmuring brook, would awake her slumbering sorrow? The youths whom I scorned, when they would behold me, would laugh, and say, Where is now thy Armor? You may say it, but I will not hear you; I live in a land that is distant. I end my short day with the maids of Morven. Their hearts, like that of their king, will feel for the unhappy.

WE brought Crimoina with us to our land. We gave her fair hand to Dargo. But still, at times, she was sad; the secret streams, as they passed, heard on their banks her sigh.—Crimoina, thy day, indeed, was short. The strings of the harp are wet, while the bard repeats thy tale.

ONE day as we pursued the deer on Morven's darkly heath, the ships of Lochlin appeared on our seas, with all their white sails, and nodding masts. We thought it might be to demand Crimoina. "I will not fight," said Connas of the little soul, "till I first know if that stranger loves our race. Let us pursue the boar, and dye the robe of Dargo with his blood. Then let us carry the body of her husband home, and see how she will mourn for his loss."

WE heard, in an evil hour, the advice of Connas. We pursued the foaming boar. We brought him low in the echoing woods. Two held him in all his foam, while Connas pierced him through with the spear.

DARGO lay down, and we sprinkled him over with the blood.

T 2

We

We bore him on our spears to Crimoina; and sung, as we went along, the song of death. Connas ran before us with the skin of the boar. I slew him, he said, with my steel; but first his deadly rusk had pierced thy Dargo. For the spear of the chief was broke, and the loose rock had failed below him.

CRIMOINA heard the tale of the tomb. She saw her Dargo brought home, as dead. Silent and pale she stood, as the pillar of ice that hangs, in the season of cold, from the brow of Mora's rock. At length she took her harp, and touched it, soft, in praise of her love. Dargo would rise, but we forbade till the song should cease; for it was sweet as the voice of the wounded swan, when she sings away her soul in death, and feels in her breast the fatal dart of the hunter *. Her companions flock, mournful, around; they

* This simile is differently expressed; being sometimes derived from the *swan*, (Mar bhinn-ghuth *caluidh* 'a guin bair), and sometimes from the *minstrel*, which is expressed by a word of nearly the same sound, (mar bhinn-ghuth *fhuidh*, &c.) with a slight variation in the rest of the stanza.—Which of the words was originally used by Ullin, is uncertain; but the first is here retained as the most beautiful, though perhaps the most exceptionable, reading. The singing of the swan has been always considered as a dream of the Greek and Latin poets: and though the Celtic may need no defence, as his expression is so dubious and so differently repeated; yet, in support of them, I must observe, that it is universally affirmed in the west of Scotland, as an undoubted fact, that the wild swans which frequent these parts in winter, and which are spe-

cifically different from the tame, emit some very melodious notes on certain occasions; particularly when two flocks of them meet, when they are wounded, and when about to take their flight, being birds of passage in these countries. Their note has, in the Galic, a particular name, which would not readily be the case if the thing had not a foundation in nature: and there is likewise a tune or song called *Luineag na b Ealui*, "the swan's ditty," the words and air of which are in imitation of this bird's singing. A part of this *Luineag* is here subjoined.

Gui' eug-ì, Gui'eug-o
Sgeula mo dhunach
Gui'eug-t
Rinn mo leire'
Gui'eug-o
Mo chasan dubh
Gui'eug-ì
'Smi fein gle' gheal
Gui'eug-o.

they assuage her pain with their song, and bid the ghosts of swans convey her soul to the airy lake of the clouds. Its place is above the mountains of Morven.

"BEND," she said, "from your clouds, ye fathers of Dargo; bend, and carry him to the place of your rest. And ye maids of Trenmor's airy land, prepare the bright robe of mist for my love. O Dargo, why have I loved, why was I beloved so much! Our souls were one; our hearts grew together, and how can I survive when they are now divided?—We were two flowers that grew in the cleft of the rock; and our dewy heads, amidst sun-beams, smiled. The flowers were two; but their root was one. The virgins of Cona saw them, and turned away their foot; 'They are lonely,' they said, 'but lovely.' The deer, in his course, leaped over them; and the roe forbore to crop them. But the wild boar, relentless, came. He tore up the one with his deadly tusk. The other bends over it his drooping head; and the beauty of both, like the dry herb before the sun, is decayed.

"My sun on Morven now is set, and the darkness of death dwells around me. My sun shone, how bright! in the morning; its beams it shed around me, in all its smiling beauty. But ere evening it is set, to rise no more; and leaves me in one cold, eternal, night. Alas, my Dargo! Why art thou so soon set? Why is thy late-smiling face o'ercast with so thick a cloud? Why is thy warm heart so soon grown cold, and thy tongue of music grown so mute!—Thy hand, which so lately shook the spear in the battle's front, there lies cold and stiff: and thy foot, this morning the foremost in the fatal chace, there lies, dead as the earth it trod. From afar, o'er seas, and hills, and dales, have I followed till this day, my love!

thy

thy steps.—In vain did my father look for my return; in vain did my mother mourn my absence. Their eye was often on the sea; the rocks often heard their cry. But I have been deaf, O my parents, to your voice; for my thoughts were fixed on Dargo.—O that death would repeat on me his stroke! O that the wild boar had also torn Crimoina's breast! Then should I mourn on Morven no more, but joyfully go with my love on his cloud!—Last night, I slept on the heath by thy side; is there not room, this night, in thy shroud? Yes, beside thee I will lay me down: with thee, this night too, I will sleep, my love, my Dargo *!"

We heard the faltering of her voice: we heard the faint note dying in her hand. We raised Dargo from his place. But it was too late. Crimoina was no more. The harp dropped from her hand. Her soul she breathed out in the song. She fell beside her Dargo.

He raised her tomb, with Crimora, on the shore; and hath prepared the gray stones for his own in the same place.

SINCE then, twice ten summers have gladdened the plains; and twice ten winters have covered with snow the woods. In all that time, the man of grief hath lived in his cave, alone; and listens only to the song that is sad. Often I find to him in the calm of noon, when Crimoina bends down from her flakey mist.

* A stanza or two more, which are sometimes added to this lament of Crimoina, are omitted; as there is here, especially in the original, a kind of pause, which seems to have been intended for the conclusion.

'S rinneadh leaba dhuinn an raoir,
Air an raon ud chinoc nan fealg;
'S ni'n deantar leab' air leth a nochd dhuinn,
S' ni'n sgarar mo chorp o'm Dhearg.—

GAUL:

G A U L*:

A P O E M.

THE A R G U M E N T.

OSSIAN, having retired, through night, to the ruins of Fingal's palace, to lament there his reverse of fortune, lights upon a piece of an old shield, which he recognizes to be that of Gaul, the son of Morni.—This circumstance introduces the history of an expedition of Fingal to Ifrona, whither Gaul had followed him, but did not arrive there till Fingal had departed. Gaul, after a brave resistance, is at length overpowered by numbers, and left upon the shore dangerously wounded. Here his spouse Evirchoma (whose anxiety had led her to come with her child to meet him) finds him, and attempts to carry him home. But the wind proving contrary, and Gaul dying of his wounds, she is so overcome with toil and grief, that she is obliged to desist, and stop in the shelter of a small isle, where Ossian, who had gone in quest of her and Gaul, finds both expiring. He carries them to Strumon; the desolate appearance of which is described, with the lamentation of Fingal over Gaul, who had been one of his chief heroes.—This poem is addressed to Malvina, the daughter of Toscar.

AWFUL is the silence of night. It spreads its mantle over the vale. The hunter sleeps on the heath. His gray dog stretches his neck over his knee. In his dreams he pursues the sons of the mountain, and with joy he half-awakes.

SLEEP

* Gaul the son of Morni was a distinguished character in the wars of Fingal, and consequently in the poems of Ossian. This piece, which celebrates his memory, is in the original called *Tiomna 'Ghuill*. It is still pretty well known; but the most common editions of it are a good deal adulterated by the interpolations of the

Ur-sgeul, or “later tales.” It begins in this manner:

Nach tiamhaidh tofd so na h oidhche,
Si taofgadh a dui'neoil air gleanntaidh!
Dh'aom suain air iuran na seilge
Air an raon, fa chu ra ghlun.
Clanna nan siabh tha e 'ruaga'
Na aising, 'fa shuain ga threigim.

SLEEP on, and take thy rest, light-bounding son of the chace; Offian will not disturb thee. Sleep on, ye sons of toil; the stars are but running their mid-way course, and Offian alone is awake on the hills. I love to wander alone, when all is dark and quiet. The gloom of night accords with the sadness of my soul; nor can the morning sun, with all his beams, bring day to me.

SPARE thy beams then, O sun! like the king of Morven, thou art too lavish of thy bounty. Dost thou not know thy light, like his, may one day fail. Spare thy lamps which thou kindlest, by thousands, in thy blue hall above; when thou thyself retirest to thy repose, below the dusky gates of the west. Why should thy lights fail, and leave thee in thy mournful halls, alone, as his friends have done to Offian? Why, mighty beam, shouldst thou waste them on Morven; when the heroes have ceased to behold them; when there is no eye to admire their green-sparkling beauty?

MORVEN, how have thy lights failed! Like the beam of the oak in thy palaces, they have decayed, and their place is the dwelling of darkness. Thy palaces themselves, like those who rejoiced within them, are fallen on the heath, and the thick shadow of death surrounds them. Temora is fallen; Tura is an heap; and Selma is silent. The sound of their shells is long since past. The song of their bards and the voice of their harps are over. A green mound of earth, a moss-clad stone lifting through it here and there its gray head, is all that preserves their memory. The mariner beholds, no more, their tall heads rising through clouds, as he bounds on the deep; nor the traveller as he comes from the desert.

I GROPE for Selma. I stumble on a ruin. Without any form
is

is the heap. The heath and the rank grafs grow about its stones ; and the lonely thistle shakes here, in the midnight breeze, its head. I feel it heavy with the drops of night.—The owl flutters around my gray hairs: the awakes the roe from his bed of mofs. He bounds lightly, without fear ; for he fees it is but the aged Offian.—Roe of mossy Selma, thy death is not in the thought of the bard. Thou hast started from the bed where often slept Fingal and Oscar, and dost thou think Offian will stain it with his spear? No; roe of the bed of Fingal and Oscar, thy death is not in the thought of the bard.—I only stretch my hand to the place where hung my father's shield ; where it hung, on high, from the roof of Selma. But the blue bending shell of heaven, O Selma! is now thy only covering. I seek the broad shield among the ruins: my spear strikes against one of its broken bosses.—It is the boss in which dwelt the voice of war ! Its sound is still pleasant to my ear: it awakes the memory of the days that are past; as when the breath of winds kindles the decaying flame on the heath of hinds.—I feel the heaving of my soul. It grows like the swelling of a flood ; but the burden of age presses it back: retire, ye thoughts of war!—Ye dark-brown years that are past, retire. Retire with your clanging shields, and let the soul of the aged rest. Why should war dwell, any more, in my thoughts, when I have forgot to lift the spear? Yes, the spear of Temora is now a staff; never more shall it strike the sounding shield.—But it does strike against a shield: let me feel its shape.—It is like the wasting moon, half-consumed with the rust of years.—It was thy blue shield, O Gaul!—the shield of the companion of my Oscar!—But why this melting of my soul?—Son of my love! thou hast

U

received

received thy fame. I will retire and give the name of Gaul to the song.—Harp of Selma, where art thou? And where art thou, Malvina? Thou wilt hear with joy of the companion * of thy Oscar.

THE night was stormy and dark: ghosts shrieked on the heath: torrents roared from the rock of the hill: thunders rolled, like breaking rocks, through clouds; and lightnings travelled on their dark-red wings through the sky.—On that night, our heroes gathered in Selma's halls; the halls that are now an heap! the oak blazed in the midst. Their faces shone in its light, joyful between their dark locks; and the shell went round, with its sparkling joy †. The bards sung, and the soft hand of virgins trembled on the string of the harp.

THE night flew on the wings of gladness. We thought the stars had scarce measured half their way, when gray morning arose, from the troubled clouds of her repose in the east. The shield of Fin-
gal

* The disparity of age between Gaul and Oscar was considerable. Yet the similarity of their characters might naturally attach them to each other. The original word, however, which is rendered *companion*, is obsolete, and may only import that they went *hand in hand* to battle. I insert so much of the passage as may enable those who understand the language to judge of the meaning of the expression.

Sa choppain eighnach nam blar!
Is far-aoibhin leam fethaid t'fhuaime;
Tha e dufga' nan laidh chuidh feach:
'Sa dh'aindeoin aols, tha manam a 'leimnich.
—Ach uam smuainte nam blar,
'S mo fhlèagh air fas na luirg;
An sgia' choppach tuille cha bhual i;
Ach ciod se'n fhuaime a dhuifg i?

Bleidd sgeith air a caithe le haois!
Mar ghealach ear-dhu' a cruth.
Sgia Ghuill is a t'ana
Sgia che'leis mo dheagh Ofsair!

† There are several opinions with regard to the liquor used in these *feasts of shells*. The most probable is, that it was made of a juice extracted from the birch-tree, and fermented. This would be more palatable than that which it is said they made of a certain kind of heath, and more suited to their exigencies than any spoils of wine which they might, at times, carry away from the Roman province. Or they might possibly have malt-liquors from other parts of the island before they themselves paid any attention to agriculture.

gal was struck. This boss † had then another sound. The heroes heard its voice, like thunder on the distant heath; and they rushed with joy from all their streams. Gaul heard it; but the water of Strumon rolled its flood, and who could cross its mighty tide?

We failed to Ifrona: we fought; and recovered the spoil of our land. Why didst thou not wait at thy mossy stream till we returned, thou lifter of the blue shield! Why, son of Morni, was thy soul so impatient for the battle?—But thou wouldst not lose thy share in any field of fame. Gaul prepared his ship, light rider of the foamy wave, and spread his sails to the first ray that streaked the clouds of the east. He followed to Ifrona the path of the king.

BUT who is that on the sea-beat rock, sad as the gray mist of the morning? Her dark hair floats, careless, on the stream of winds; her white hand is around it, like the foam of floods. Two dewy drops start into her eyes as they are fixed on the ship of Gaul; and on her breast hangs, in the midst of his smiles, her child. She hums in his ear a song. Sighing, she stops short. She has forgot what it was. Thy thoughts, Evirchoma, are not of the song: they sail, along with thy love, on the deep. The lessened ship is half in view. A low-sailing cloud now spreads its skirt between, and hides it like a dark rock in the passing mist. "Safe be thy course, rider of the foamy deep; when, my love, shall I again behold thee!"

U 2

E-

† The boss of Fingal's shield, found was the usual mode of giving the alarm just now in the ruins of his palace. The or challenge to battle among the Caledonians.
Beim-sgeithe, or "striking the shield,"

Evirchoma * returns to Strumon's halls; but her steps are slow, and her face is sad. She is like a lonely ghost in a calm, when he walks in the mist of the pool, and the wind of hills is silent. Often she looks back, in the midst of her sighs, and turns her tearful eye towards Ocean. "Safe be thy course, rider of the foamy deep; when shall I again behold thee!"

NIGHT with all her murky darkness met the son of Morni in the midst of his course. The dim moon hid herself in the caves of clouds, and no star looked out from the windows of the sky. His bark in silence rides the deep: and, in our course, we miss the chief, as homeward we bound to Morven.

IFRONA hides itself in the morning mist. The step of Gaul is careless on its shore: he wonders he does not hear the roar of battle. He strikes his shield, that his friends may know of his coming. "Does Fingal," he says, "sleep; and the battle unfought? Heroes of Morven, are you here?"

O THAT we had! Then had this spear defended thee from the foe; or low had its owner fallen. No harmless staff, the prop of tottering years, was then Temora's spear. It was the lightning that overturns the lofty trees in its red-winged course, when the mountains tremble before it. Ossian was then no blasted tree that stands alone on the heath, shaking before every breeze, and half-bent over the stream by wintry storms. No; I stood like the pine of Cona, with all my green branches about me, smiling at the storm of heaven, and tossing themselves with joy in the roar of winds.

* *Aoibhir-chaomha*, "mild and stately," 3d book of Temora, and some other of Ossian's poems.
the wife of Gaul, and daughter of *Casdu-conglar*. Mention is made of her in the

† "Fil-

winds. O that I had been nigh the chief of Strumon, when blew the storm of Ifrona!

WHERE, then, ye ghosts of Morven, were you? Were you asleep in your airy caves, the dark-gray chambers of the clouds, or sporting with the withered leaf, the play of whistling boys, when you did not warn your sons of the danger of Gaul?—But you did warn us, friendly spirits of our fathers! Twice you drove back our sails to Ifrona's shore, as you sent your terrible roar along the deep. But we did not understand the sign. We thought you had been the ghosts of foes, that meant to oppose our return.—The king drove his blade through the gray folds of their robe, as over his head they passed. "Pursue," he said, "the thistles beard in other lands; or sport, where you can, with the sons of the feeble."

MOURNFUL they flew upon their blast. Their sound was like mountain-sighs on dark streams, when cranes foretel the storm. Some thought they half-heard from them the name of Gaul.

* * * * *

"AM I alone in the midst of thousands? Is there no sword to shine, with mine, in the darkness of battle?—The breeze blows towards Morven. Thither is the course of white-headed billows. Shall Gaul lift his sails? His friends are not with him. What shall Fingal say, who bade his sons to mark the path of Gaul in battle†? What shall the bards say if they see a cloud on the fame of the son of Morni? Morni! my father! wouldst thou not blush if thy son retired? Yes, with thy white hairs, thou wouldst hide thy face in the presence of the heroes of other times, and sigh in the wind above the vale of
Stru-

† "Fillan and Oscar, of the dark-brown hair! fair Ryno, with the pointed steel! advance with valour to the fight, and be- hold the son of Morni. Let your swords be like his in the strife, and behold the deeds of his hands." Fingal, B. 4.

Strumon. The ghosts of the feeble would behold thee and say, 'There the father of him who once fled in Ifrona.' No; thy son will not fly, O Morni! his soul is a beam of fire; it catches in its red flame the groves. If wide they spread their wings, as wide it spreads its rage.—Morni, come in thy mountain cloud, and behold thy son. Thy soul was a crowded stream that swelled and foamed, when rocks in the narrow path opposed its course; the same shall be the soul of Gaul.—Evirchoma! Ogal!—But lovely beams mix not with the tempest of heaven: they wait till the storm is over. The thoughts of Gaul must now be of battle. All other thoughts away.—O that thou wert with me, Ossian, as in the strife of Lathmon!—But my soul is a spirit of the storm. Dark-eddy-ing it rushes, alone, through the troubled deep. It heaves a thousand billows over trembling isles; then careless rides upon the car of winds."

THE shield of Morni is struck again in Ifrona *. No half-consumed, earth-crufted board was this orb then! Ifrona rocked with its sound, and its thousands gathered around Gaul. But the sword of Morni is in the terrible hand of the chief; and, like the green branches of the forest, their ranks are hewn before him. Their
blue

* The conduct of Gaul on this occasion may be censured as rash, in drawing upon himself a whole host when he was alone. But as he had before struck his shield, in hopes his friends had been near him, it is probable that he could not well decline an engagement to which himself had sounded the alarm.—It may further be observed, that the behaviour of Gaul on this occasion corresponds very much with his character in the poem of

Lathmon, and indeed with the manners of the times, which made it disgraceful for a hero to retire on any pretext whatever. The conduct of Oscar in the *War of Caros* affords a remarkable instance of this. The great resemblance betwixt Celtic manners and the laws of chivalry in later times, makes it probable, that the first had suggested most of those ideas on which the latter were founded.

† In

blue arms are strewed upon the heath, and the birds of death are hovering round.

THOU hast seen, Malvina, a mighty wave recoiling, white, from the broad side of a whale, when her path is in the foamy deep. Thou hast seen, on the top of that wave, a flock of hungry sea-fowl gathered about the whale which they dare not approach; tho' they see her float, half-dead, on ocean's stream, with her white belly turned above like sails: so stood the sons of Ifrona, afraid; and kept at bay by the sword of Gaul.

BUT the strength of the chief of Strumon begins to fail. He leans to the side of a tree. His blood marks, with wandering streams, his blue shield, and a hundred arrows with their heads of steel have torn his side. Still, however, he holds his sword, a meteor of death, in his hand, and the foes are afraid.

BUT sons of Ifrona! what means that stone which you try to lift? Is it to mark to future times your fame †? Ah! no; the thoughts of your soul are hard as steel. Scarce can seven hurl the rock from the hill: it rolls its course against the thigh of Gaul.—The chief sinks upon his knee; but over his broad, brazen shield, he still looks terrible. His foes are afraid to come nigh. They leave him to pine away in death, like an eagle that lies upon a rock, when the bolt of heaven hath broke its wings.

O THAT we had known in Selma that such, whirlwind of battle! was thy fate. Then had we not listened to the songs of virgins, nor to the voice of harps and bards. The spear of Fingal had not slept so quiet by the wall; nor the son of Luno rested in
his

† In ancient times, pillars of stone were frequently erected in the field of battle to commemorate the victory.

his sheath. Then had we not wondered, that night, to see the king half-rising from the feast, and looking to his shield. "I thought," he said, "the light spear of a ghost had touched its boss; but it was only the passing breeze."

GHOST of Morni! why didst thou not strike it louder again; or pour thy knowledge on the dream of our rest? Why didst thou not come to Ossian, and say, "Awake, be thy path again on the wave of the deep."—But thou hadst been flying in haste to Ifrona, to mourn over the fall of thy son.

MORNING arose on Strumon. Evirchoma awoke from her troubled dreams. She heard the sound of the chace on Morven, and wondered no voice of Gaul was there. She listens; but the rock does not echo to his cry. The groves of Strumon hear only the sighs of the fair.

EVENING comes; but no dark ship is seen, light-bounding over the deep. The soul of Evirchoma is mournful.

"WHAT detains my hero in the isle of Ifrona? Why, my love, art thou not returned with Morven's chiefs? Thou hast perhaps missed them on the deep. But yet thou mightest have ere now returned. How long shall thy Evirchoma bend from the rock of waves? How long shall the tear wander, like a stream in mist, upon her cheek?—Is the child of our love forgot? If not, where are the wonted smiles of his father? The tears of Ogal * descend with mine; and his sighs to mine reply. O that his father heard him,

as,

* *Ogal*, "young Gaul." In those times men did not receive their proper names till they had distinguished themselves by some renowned action, or discovered some peculiar characteristic in their person or behaviour. This, like all the other customs of the ancient Caledonians, had a happy tendency to inspire their youth with the love of virtue and bravery; the only avenue to that immortality of fame of which they were always so ambitious.

as, lisping, he half-repeats his name; then quick would be the steps of his return to relieve him. But ah me! I remember my dream through night; and I fear the day of thy return, O Gaul, is over.

“THE sons of Morven, methought, pursued the chase; but absent was the chief of Strumon. At a distance I saw him reclined on his spear; on one foot only leaned the chief. The other seemed a column of gray mist. It varied its form to every breeze. I approached my love; but a blast from the desert came. He vanished.—But dreams are the children of fear. Chief of Strumon, I shall again behold thee. Thou wilt lift thy fair head before me, like the beam of the east, when he looks on Cromla’s † haunted heath, where I took all night, amidst the terror of ghosts, the weary traveller. The spirits of the dark retire on their deep-rustling blast; and he, glad, takes his staff, and pursues the rest of his journey.

“Yes, my love, I shall behold thee. Is not that thy ship that climbs the distant wave: its sails are like the foam of the rock; like a tree that waves its top in snow? Is it thy ship; or is it a cloud of mist that deceives, through the darkening shades, my tearful eye?—Still it appears like the ship of my love.—Yes, dark-bounder on the rolling deep, it is thou.—Dusky night, hide not from my view his sails. Thou beginnest to hide them under thy raven wings: but I will bound, in this skiff, on the darkly-rolling deep; and meet in the folds of night my love.”

X

SHE

† *Crom-blia*, “bending hill,” or “the hill of bending.” It was probably a Druidical place of worship, which might affix to it the ideas of awe and terror here ascribed to it.

* This

SHE went †; but no ship meets her on the deep. It was but a cloud low-sailing on its wave; the bark of some mariner's ghost, pursuing the sport of his former days.

THE skiff of Evirchoma flies before the wind. Ifrona's bay receives it through night, where lonely waves roll themselves beneath the gloom of hanging woods. The thin moon glides from cloud to cloud. Its course, through trees, is on the edge of the hill. The stars, at times, glance through their parted mist, and hide themselves again under their vapoury veil. With the faint light, Evirchoma beholds the beauty of her child. "Thou art lovely in the dreams of thy rest."—Over him she bends a while in sighs; and then leaves him in the womb of her skiff. "Rest in peace, my child; I seek thy father along this winding beach."

THRICE she leaves him, and thrice she quick returns. She is like the dove that leaves in the cleft of Ulla's rock her young, when she wanders, over the plain, in search of food. She sees the dark berry on the heath below her; but the thought of the hawk comes across her soul, and she oft returns to behold her young, before she tastes it.—Thus the soul of Evirchoma is divided, like a wave which the rock and the wind toss, by turns, between them.—"But what voice is that from the breast of the breeze? it comes from the tree of the lonely shore."

"SAD," it says, "I pine here alone; what avails that my arm was so strong in battle? Why does not Fingal, why does not Offian, know,

† This expedition of Evirchoma will land. Besides, she might not probably not appear unnatural or extravagant, if intend to go far from the shore at her first we consider, that, in those days, the women frequently bore a part in the most setting out, as she thought she had seen the ship of Gaul at no great distance. arduous undertakings both by sea and

* What

know, that I am thus low on the shore of night? Ye lights above, that at times behold me, tell it in Selma, by your red signs, when the heroes come forth from the feast to behold your beauty. Ye ghosts that glide on nightly beams, if through Morven be your eddying course, tell, as you pass, the tale in the ear of the king. Tell him, that here I pour out my soul; that cold in Ifrona is my dwelling; that two days have brought me no food, and that my drink is the briny wave.—But tell not this in Strumon; let not your knowledge come to the dreams of Evirchoma. Be the rustling of your blasts far from her halls: shake not roughly your wings, as, even at a distance, you pass. My love might hear it; and some dark-boding thought might travel, as mist, across her soul. Be therefore your course, ye spirits of night, far off; and let the dreams of my love be pleasant.—The morning, Evirchoma, is yet distant. Sleep on, with thy lovely child in thy arms, and pleasant be thy dreams in the murmur of Strumon! Pleasant, in the valley of roes, be thy dreams, O Evirchoma! let no thought of Gaul disturb thee. His pains are forgot, when the dreams of his love are pleasant.”

“AND dost thou think thy love could sleep, and her Gaul in pain? Dost thou think the dreams of Evirchoma could be pleasant, while thou wert absent? No; my heart is not unfeeling as that rock; nor did I receive my birth in Ifrona’s land*.—But how

X 2

shall

* What this Ifrona was, is uncertain; but it seems to have been remarkable for the cruelty of its inhabitants. In the following lines of a fragment concerning the death of Clonar, who had been slain there, many properties of the *Celtic hell* are ascribed to it; from which, and the

similarity of the names, it is probable it might have been considered as a type of it.

I sin alluidh na Freoine,
Le d' thiugh-sheo buan, 's led' ua' bheilstan;
A thir nam pian! gun mhiadh gun bhaigh;
Dol a d' dhail be sud mo dheifinn.

“ Ifrona,

shall I relieve thee, Gaul; or where shall Evirchoma find food in the land of foes?—I remember the tale of Casdu-conglas.

“ WHEN I was young, in my father’s arms, his course was one night on the deep with Crifollis, beam of love. The storm drove us on a rock. Three gray trees dwelt lonely there, and shook in the troubled air their leaf-less heads. At their mossy root a few red berries crept. These Casdu-conglas pulled. He pulled them, but he tasted not. Thou needest them, he said, Crifollis; and, to-morrow, the deer of his own mountain will supply Casdu-conglas.—The morning came; the evening returned: but the rock is still their dwelling.—My father wove a bark of the branches of the gray trees*; but his soul is feeble for want of food. ‘Crifollis,’ he said, ‘I sleep. When the calm shall come, be thou gone with thy child to Idronlo; the hour of my waking is distant.’—Never shall the hills of I-dronlo behold me,’ she replied, ‘without my love. O why didst thou not tell me thy soul had failed! both might have been sustained by the mountain-berries. But the breasts of Crifollis will sup-

“ Ifrona, horrible isle! covered with thick and ever-during mist: thou noisome abode of wild and venomous beasts: thou land of pain, where fame and friendship are strangers.—I tremble to go near thee.”

As the name of *Glen-Fresin*’ is still retained by a valley in the neighbourhood of Clyde, it is probable the scene of this poem was somewhere on that coast, the inhabitants of which were generally at variance with the people of Morven. The situation of many places shew, that anciently, *I*, or *Inis*, did not always signify an island, but sometimes a promontory,

or any place nearly inclosed by the sea: as *Deiginisb*, *Craiginisb*, &c.

* The *Curachs* (or *vimentis alvei* of Solinus) which were the first boats of the Caledonians, were made of wicker, and covered again with hides. The name, for some time, seems to have continued, after the construction of their vessels was much improved, as the ancient poems give sometimes the name of *Curach* to vessels of a considerable size. That which brought St Columba and his companions to Iona, was called *Curach*, though near 40 feet long, if we may credit tradition.

supply her love. I feel them full within, and thou, my love, must drink. For my sake thou must live, and not fall here asleep.'—He rose: his strength returned: the wind retired: they reached I-dronlo. Often did my father lead me to Crisollis' tomb, as he told the lovely tale. 'Evirchoma,' he said, 'let thy love to thy spouse be such, when the days of thy youth shall come.' And it is such, O Gaul; these breasts will supply, this night, thy soul: Tomorrow we shall be safe on the shore of Strumon.

"LOVELIEST of thy race," said Gaul, "retire thou to Strumon's shore; let no beam of light find thee in Ifrona. Retire in thy skiff with Ogal; why should he fall like a tender flower, which the warrior, unfeeling, lops off with the end of his spear; himself of no son the father. He lops it off, with all its drops of dew; as, careless, he walks along, humming the song of the cruel. Retire, and leave me in Ifrona; for my strength, like the stream of summer, is failed: I wither like the green herb before the blast of winter. No friendly beam of the sun, no returning spring shall revive me.—Bid the warriors of Morven bring me to their land: but no, the light of my fame is clouded. Let them only raise my tomb beneath this tall tree. The stranger will see it as he looks around him from his watery course. Sighing, he will shake his head, and say, There is all that remains of the mighty!"

"AND here too shall be all that remains of the fair; for I will sleep in the same tomb with my love. Our narrow bed shall be the same in death; our ghosts in the folds of the same gray cloud shall be joined. The virgins of Morven will mark, through moon-beams, our steps, and say, 'Behold, they are lovely.' Yes, traveller of the
water

watery way, drop the double tear; for here, with her beloved Gaul, is the slumbering Evirchoma.

“BUT ah! what voice is that in the breeze? The cries of Ogal pour, helpless, in my ear. They awake my sleeping foul. Yes; my foul rolls restless within, and tosses from side to side in its uneasy bed. And why heaves thus the soul of Gaul; why bursts that sigh from the warrior’s breast? Feel thus the hearts of fathers for their sons; have they, at times, the soul of a mother? Yes, for I feel the stirrings of thine: let me bear thee to the skiff where our child was left. Come, the burden of my love will be light: Evirchoma will be strong when her Gaul is in danger.—Give me that spear, it will support on the shore my steps.”

SHE bore him to her skiff. She struggled all night with the wave. The parting stars beheld the decay of her strength: the morning light beheld it fail, as the mist that melts in the beam of heat*.

I SLEPT, that night, on the hunter’s heath. Morni, with all his gray, parted locks, rose in my dreams. Above me he leaned on his trembling staff. His face of age was sad; it was marked with the course of the tear. The stream wandered, here and there, on his cheek. The deep furrows, which time had worn, were full. Thrice looked the red eye of the aged over the deep; and thrice arose his sigh. “Is this,” he faintly said, “a time for the friend of Gaul to sleep?”—A blast comes, rustling, along the bended trees. Its noise awakes the cock of the heath. At the root of his dark-
brown

* In the most common editions of *Tíomna 'Ghuill* a long dialogue is foisted in here, which is rejected as spurious, or belonging to some other Gaul whose wife was

called *Aina*. It begins with

A Ríghbhin is binne ceol
Gluais gú malda, 's na gabh bron, &c.

brown bush, he lifts his head from beneath his wing ; and, trembling, raises the mournful, plaintive voice.—I started at the cry from my dream. I saw Morni rolled away, \ a gray cloud, in the fold of the blast. I pursued the path which he marked on the sea. I found on the blue face of the wave, sheltered by a desert isle, the skiff. On the dark side of it leaned the head of Gaul. Under his elbow rested the shield of battle. Over its edge half-looked the wound, and poured the red-stream around its boss. I lifted the helmet from his face. His yellow locks, folded in sweat, were wandering on his brow. At the burst of my grief he tried to raise his eye ; but it was heavy. Death came, like night on the eye of the sun, and covered it with all its darkness.—Never more, O Gaul, shalt thou behold the father of thy Oscar.

BESIDE the son of Morni is the decayed beauty of Evirchoma. Her child smiles, careless, in her arms ; and plays with the head of the spear. Her words were few : her voice was feeble. I gave her my hand to raise her up. She laid it on the head of Ogal, as, sighing, she pierc'd with her look my melting soul.—No more shall Evirchoma rise ! Sweet helpless child, thou needest no longer cling to the breast of thy mother. Ossian shall be thy father : but Evirallin is not ; and who shall supply the place of Evirchoma ! —But I feel the meltings of my soul return.—Why should Ossian remember all the griefs that are past ? Their memory is mournfully-pleasant ; but his tears would fail.

WE came to Strumon's mossy streams. Silence dwelt around their banks. No column of smoke, blue-curling, rises from the hall. No voice of songs is there ; no soft trembling sound of the harp. The breeze rushes, whistling, through its open porch ; and
lifts

lifts the dry, rustling leaf, upon its eddying wing. The perching eagle sits already on its lofty top, and marks it out as the place of her repose. "Here," she seems to say, "I may safely build my nest; for who can climb its height, to make my brown sons afraid?"—The dun little son of the roe beholds her, as, wandering below, he looks up to what he thinks a gray rock.—He beholds her, and is afraid. He hides himself under a broad shield, near the gate of the house.—Stretched across the threshold, swift Cof-ula lies. He hears a rustling near. He thinks it may be the tread of Gaul. In his joy he starts up, and shakes from his dim eye the tear. But when he sees it is only the son of the roe, he turns his mournful face away. He lies again on his cold stone, and the song of his grief is dismal.

BUT who can tell the sadness of Morven's heroes? They come in silence, each from his own winding vale; slowly moving, like the dark shadow of mist on the brown rushy plain, when the wind is scarce awake on the hill. They see the bulwark of the battle low; and their bursting tears, like the ooze of rocks, descend. Fingal leaned to a blasted pine, that was overturned at the head of Gaul. His gray locks, as he bends, half-hide his tears; but in his white beard they meet the whistling wind.

"AND art thou fallen," at length he said; "art thou fallen, first of my heroes! when my strength has failed? Shall I hear thy voice no more in my halls, nor the sound of thy shield in my battles? Shall thy sword no more lighten the dark path of my danger; nor thy spear scatter whole hosts of my enemies? Shall thy dark ship ride no more the storm, while thy joyful rowers pour before them the song on the watery mountains? Shall the children of Morven

no

no more awake my soul from its thought, as they cry, ' Behold the ship of Gaul !' Shall the harps of virgins, and the voice of bards, no more be heard when thou art coming ?—I see not the red-streaming of thy banners on the heath ; the tread of thy foot is not there ; nor the sound of thy unmiffing arrow. The bounding of thy dogs is not on the hill ; they mournfully howl in the door of thy empty house. The deer grazes on the plain before them : but they weep on ; they do not heed him ; for they see not Gaul returning.—Alas ! sons of the chase, the day of his return is past. His glad voice shall call you no more, in the morning, to pursue the steps of roes through rocky mountains. Here, forgetful of the chase, he rests ; nor can even the sound of Morven's shield, O Gaul, awake thee !

" STRENGTH of the warrior, what art thou ! To-day, thou rollest the battle, a cloud of dust, before thee ; and the dead strew thy path, as the withered leaves mark the course of a ghost of night.—To-morrow, the short dream of thy valour is over ; the terror of thousands is vanished. The beetle, on his dusky wing, hums the song of triumph over the mighty ; and, unmolested, offends him.—

" WHY, son of the feeble, didst thou wish for the strength of the chief of Strumon, when thou didst behold him brightening in the course of his steel, as brightens a pillar of ice in the midst of sun-beams ? Didst thou not know that the strength of the warrior soon fails, as melts in the beam that ice which thou hast been viewing ? Its date is short ; like the bright cloud that glitters to the ray of the evening. The hunter sees it from his rock, as he hies him home, and admires the rain-bow form of its
Y beauty.

beauty. But a few moments, on their eagle-pinion, pass; the sun shuts his eye of light; the blast whirls that way his rustling course, and a dark mist is all that remains of the gay form.—It is all, O Gaul! that now remains of thee.—But thy memory, chief of Fingal's heroes, shall remain. No cloud of mist that shall pass away, on its own gray wings is thy fame.

“ RAISE †, ye bards, his tomb; with that of the sun-beam of his love, Evirchoma. This gray stone shall mark to the traveller the place of his repose; and that tall oak shall shade it from the noon-day heat. The passing breeze shall bid its boughs be early green, and long preserve their beauty. Its leaves shall shoot out their head, through the shower of the spring, while other trees are still bare, and the heath around them blasted. The birds of summer, from their distant land, shall first perch on Strumon's oak; from afar they shall behold its green beauty. The ghost of Gaul will hear; in his cloud, their song; and the virgins of the race to come will praise Evirchoma. The memory of you two, while these monuments remain, shall travel through future years together.—Then, when thou, O stone, shalt crumble into dust; and thou, O tree, moul-

† This paragraph loses much of the artless simplicity of the original, as it could not be rendered with perspicuity without paraphrasing some of its images. The original passage is here annexed, that such as choose to do it may have it in their power to compare it with the translation.

Cairibh, a chlanna nan teud,
Leaba Ghuill, 's a dhéo-gréise la' ris;
Far an comh'raichear a leab' ann cein.
Gad' raibh geugan ard ga sgaille'
Fui' sgei' na daraig is gairme bla',
Is luaithe fas, 's is buaine dreach;
A blúrchdas a duilleach air anail na frois,

'S an raon-man cuairt di seargte.
A duilleach, o iomal na tíre,
Chítear le coín an t samhruidh;
Is luaidh gach eun mar a thig
Air barra' geige na Strumoin.
Cluinnidh Goll an ceilair na cheo,
'S oighean a' seinn air Aoibhir-chaoimha.
'S gus an caochail gach ní dhiu so
Cha sgarar ar cuimhne o' cheile.
—Gus an críon gu leathre a chlach,
'S an searg as le h aois a gheug so.
Gus an sguir na sruthain a ruith
'S an dea' mathair-uisge nan sleibhte;
Gus an caillear ann dílinn aois
Gach sílth 's dan is aobhar sgeil;
Cho'n sheorúich an t Aineal “ Co mac Móra,
No c'aít an co'nuidh' Rí” na Strumoin?”

moulder with age away ; when thou, mighty stream, shalt cease to run, and the mountain-spring shall, no more, supply thy course ; when your songs, O bards, in the dark flood of Time shall be lost ; and the memory of yourselves, with those you sung, in its vast current be swept away and forgot :—Then, perhaps, may cease to be heard the fame of Gaul ; and the stranger may ask, “ Who was Morni’s son, and who was Strumon’s chief ? ”

D U T H O N A :

A P O E M *.

THE A R G U M E N T.

FINGAL, pursuing Dorla who had carried off the spoils of Selma in his absence, lands in the night in Duthona, the island of his friend Conar. His landing is observed and opposed by Dorla, who had also called here and subdued Conar. Fingal thinking he had been opposed by his friends, was satisfied with making them retreat a little, till day-light should shew them their mistake. But learning how matters stood from Conar, who is accidentally discovered in a cave where he had been confined by Dorla, spies are sent to watch the motions of the enemy.—Next morning Fingal and the remains of Conar's people engage with Dorla, who falls in battle.—Minla, the daughter of Conar, who had been found concealed in the habit of a young bard, is unexpectedly restored to her father, who gives her in marriage to one of Fingal's heroes.

WHY dost thou roar so loud, O sea, on Morven's rocky coast ; and why, O wind of the south, dost thou pour thy strength against the shore of my echoing hills ? Is it to detain my sails from the land of the foe, and stop my growing fame ?—But, ocean, thy billows roar in vain ; and thou, wind of the south, mayest blow ; but you cannot detain the sails of Fingal, from the land of the distant Dorla. The roar of your strength shall soon decay ;

* *Du'-thonna*, "the isle of dark waves." This poem, from one of the incidents mentioned in it, is often called *Dan O'-mara*, or "The song of the maid on the shore." The versification in several places is broken, and only supplied from the traditionary tale which accompanies the

poem. A few lines in the beginning are omitted, and the translation begins with the following stanza :

Is garbh leam beacach do thonn,
A mhuir cheann-ghlas, ri bonn mo shleibh ;
Is ofnaiche att'ar, citi', a deas,
Chon e mo leas gu do' sheid sibh, &c.

decay; and the blue face of my seas shall be calm behind, when you retire to rest in the green groves of the desert.—Yes, thy strength, O wind, shall fail; but the fame of Fingal shall remain: my renown shall be heard in the land that is distant.

THE king spoke, and his heroes gathered around. The bushy hair of Dumolach sings in the wind. Leth bends over his shield of brass; it is marked with many a scar. Morlo tosses in air his glittering spear; and the joy of battle is in the eye of Gormallon.

WE rush through ocean's surgy foam. Whales, trembling, fly before us on the deep. Isles see us, and fly out of our way; they hide themselves behind the path of our ship. Duthona lifts its head like a rock of ooze, which the distant wave seems, at times, to intercept. “It is the land of Conar,” said Fingal; “the land of the friend of my people!”

NIGHT descends on the fable deep. The mariner cries, It is dark. He wanders from his course: he looks in vain for the guiding star.—He half-sees it, through the torn skirt of a showery cloud: with joy he bids his companions behold it. They look up; but the window of the cloud is shut, and the light is again concealed.—The steps of the night, on the deep, are dark. Let our course be to the shore till morning arise with her yellow locks in the east; till dark waves clothe themselves in light, and mountains lift their green heads in day.

OUR course is to Duthona's bay.—But see that dim ghost on the rock! He is tall as the gray pine to which he leans. His shield is a broad cloud. Behind it rolls in darkness the rising moon. That column of dark-blue mist, studded above with a red star, is his spear; and that meteor that gleams on the heath, his sword. Winds,
in

in their eddies, lift at times, like smoke, his hair. These flames, in two caves below it, are his eyes.—Often had Fingal seen the sign of battle; but who could believe it in the land of Conar, his friend?

THE king ascends the rock. The blade of Luno waves a meteor of light in his hand, and Carril walks behind him. The spirit beholds the warrior approach: on the wings of his blast he flies. Fingal pursues him with his voice: the hills of Duthona hear the sound. They shake with all their gray rocks and groves. From their dreams of danger, the people start along the heath, and kindle the alarm of the flame.

ARISE, my warriors, said the returning king, with a sigh; arise, let each gird on his mail, and spread his broad shield before him. We must fight; but not with the wonted joy of our strength when the roar of the battle rose. Our friends meet us through night; and Fingal will not tell his name*. Our foes might hear it, and say, “The warriors of Morven were once afraid.” No; let each gird on his mail, and spread the shield: but let the spear err of its mark, and the arrow fly to the wind. With morning light we shall be seen of our friends, and our joy shall be great in Duthona.

WE

* In those days of heroism it was reckoned cowardice to tell one's name to an enemy, lest it should be considered as claiming kindred with him and declining the combat. The same extravagant notions of honour seem to have prevailed among some other nations of antiquity. In the Argonautic expedition, Jason, after having been hospitably entertained by Cyzicus king of the Deliones, was driven back on his coast, through night, and he and his people taken for Pelasgians, with whom they were then at war. Rather than dispense with this punctilio of honour, Jason fought till day-light shewed his friends their mistake, after a great many of them, with their king, had been killed. Vid. *Ancient Univ. Hist. of Fab. and Heroic Times*, § 6.

WE met, in our rattling steel, the darkly-moving host. Their arrows fell, like a shower of hail, on our shields; but we fought not the fall of our friends. They gathered about us, like the sea about a rock. The king saw that his people must fight or fall. He came from his hill in the awful stride of his strength, like a ghost that hath clothed himself in storms. The moon raised her head above the hill, and beamed on the shining blade of Luno. It glittered in the hand of the king, like a pillar of ice in the fall of Lora, when the sun is bright in the midst of his journey. Duthona saw its blaze, but could not bear its light. They retired, like darkness when it sees the steps of the morning, and sunk in a wood that rose behind.

SLOW-MOVING like Lubar, when he repeats in Dura's plain his course, we came to a hollow stream that ran before us on the heath. Its bed is between two banks of ferns, amidst many an aged birch. There we talked of the storms of battle and the actions of former heroes. Carril sung of the times of old: Offian praised the deeds of Conar; nor did his harp forget the mild beauty of Minla.

THE voice of the song ceased. The breeze whistled along the gurgling stream. It bore to our ear the sound of grief. It was soft as the voice of ghosts in the bosom of groves, when they travel over the tombs of the dead.

Go, Offian, said the king, and search the banks of the stream; some one of our friends lies there, on his dark shield, overturned like a tree in the strife of night. Bring him to Fingal, that he may apply the herbs of the mountain; lest any cloud should darken our joy in the land of Duthona.

I WENT, and listened to the song of wo ; my tears flowed, in silence, over the stream.

“ FORLORN and dark is my dwelling in the storm of night *. No friendly voice is heard, save the cry of the owl from the cleft of her rock. No bard is nigh in my lonely cave, to deceive the tedious night.—But night and day are the same to me ; no beam of the sun travels here in my darkly dwelling. I see not his yellow hair in the east ; nor, in the west, the red beam of his parting. I see not the moon, sailing through pale clouds, in her brightness ; nor trembling, through trees, on the blue face of the stream. No warm beam from either visits the cave of Conar. O that I had fallen in the strife of Dorla ; that the tomb had received my Minla ! Then had the fame of Duthona passed away, like autumn’s silent beam, when it moves over the brown fields between the shadows of mist. The children under Duthrona’s oak feel it warm, and bless the beam. It is over ; they bend their bows, and forget it.—Forget me also, children of my people, if Dorla does not meet you, like the blasting wind of the frost, when the rose-buds of the wood are tender. O that I had met death before you ; when I strode with Fingal before the strength of Swaran ! Then my tomb might rise before the king, and my fame be sung by the voice of Ossian. The bards of the distant years, sitting around the winter-flame, would say, when the feast was over, ‘ Listen to the song of Conar.’—But now my fame shall not be heard ; my tomb shall not be known. The stranger stumbles on a gray stone in Duthona. Its head is covered with the rank, whistling grass. He turns it away

Z

with

* This song of Conar has in the original an air of melancholy extremely suitable to the occasion of it.

Is doracha ‘san doirinn mo cho’nuidh !
Gun ghuth am choir ach ian tiamhaidh ;
Threig am Bard :—tha’n oidhche mall ;
O’s oidhche gach la dhambha, &c.

with the end of his spear. He perceives the mouldering tomb. 'Who sleeps,' he asks, 'in this narrow house?' The children of the vale reply, 'We know not; the song doth not record his name.'

—BUT it shall record thy name, O Conar! thou shalt not be forgotten by the voice of Cona. Come, leave thy cave, and lift again the spear of battle. The foe shall wither, like the frosted fern, before thee; and thy fame shall flourish, as the green oak of Duthona, when it lifts its tall head above the mist of the vale, and spreads its glittering leaf to the shower of the sun.

"FRIENDLY is thy voice, son of night; for ghosts affright not me. No; their voice is pleasant to forsaken Conar. O let thy converse be oft in my cave! our words shall be of the narrow house, and of the airy dwellings of heroes. Of other worlds we shall speak: but of my friends, of my fame, we shall be silent.—My fame is departed like the melting of mists on Mora, when the sun is high, and the clouds retire to the desert. My friends, too, are distant: between their peaceful shields they sleep, and no dream of me disturbs them. And let them sleep; spirit of the friendly soul, my dwelling shall soon be with thee in the peaceful abode of thy rest. Together we shall visit the children of grief in their nightly cave, and make them forget their pain in their dreams*. We will wander with their souls through fields of fame; and bid the mighty shake in their presence. Their thong shall be a robe: their cave the noble Selma. The wind in their ear shall be the music of harps, and the whistling grass the song of virgins. Till then be
thy

* The bard, it would appear from this passage, was of opinion, that dreams were sometimes occasioned by the agency of departed spirits, who had the power of impressing the mind with sensations of either the pleasing or painful kind.

thy visits to Conar frequent; for thy voice to me is pleasant, air-borne son of the night."

I CUT the thongs from the hand of the chief, and brought him to the king. Their faces brightened with joy between their gray locks, when they met; for they remembered their early days: The days, when first they drew the string in the mossy vale of streams; when the stag was but the thistle's beard, and the deer the wandering down of the desert. Their years afterwards grew together; and roes, before their swift steps, bounded on Gormal.

BUT who, said Fingal, hath confined the friend of Morven to his cave? Strong must be his arm; and unerring his steel in the strife of battle.

"DORLA heard that my arm had failed; and he came to my halls by night, when my friends were absent. I fought; but his numbers prevailed. Dorla is still in Duthona: Minla is sorrowful in his presence; and my people, through their secret vales, are scattered."

FINGAL heard the words of Conar; and the gathering of his mild brows, like clouds that cover the storm, is terrible. He shakes the aspen spear in his hand, and looks on the sword of Luno. "This is no time," he says, "for rest; when he who spoiled Morven is so nigh. His people too are many; for they met us in the midst of night, when we thought they had been the host of Conar.—Osfian, be thy steps, with Gormallon, along the shore. Dumolach and Leth! to Conar's halls; and if Minla be there, spread before her your dark-broad shields, and defend her. Morlo, be thou on the heath, that our foes may not spread the sail to the wind, before the sun shall light us to battle. And where art thou, Carril of the

song? Be nigh the chief of Duthona with thy harp. Its sound is a beam of light that rises in the midst of storms. The tempest, when it shines, retires; and the darkness flies to the desert."

CARRIL came with his harp. Its sound was soft, as the gliding of ghosts on the bank of Lora; when they hide themselves in the white mist of noon, and their sound is on the gale of the stream.—Move in silence, stream of night, that we may listen to the song of the bard.

"OVER Lara of streams there bends an oak. Below it, one lone thistle lifts, between two mossy stones, its head. It sheds, in the passing stream, its drops of dew. Two ghosts are seen there at noon, when the sun is on the plain, and silence reigns in Morven. One is thy ghost, aged Ural? Thy hair wanders, a whiter mist, over two clouds that form thy darkened eyes.—And who is that in the cloud of snow before thee? Who but that fair huntress of the roe, thy daughter?

"THE youths of Lara were at the chase: they were spreading the feast in the booth of the desert. Colgar saw them; and came to Lara in secret, like the torrent that rushes, sudden, from the hill, when no shower is seen by the sunny vale.—' Daughter of Ural, thou must go with Colgar. The thongs must confine thy father. He might strike the shield. The youths might hear its sound in the desert.'

"COLGAR, I love thee not. Leave me here with my father. None is with him. His eyes are dark, and his gray hairs are lonely.

"COLGAR would not hear. The daughter of Ural must go with him; but her steps on the heath are mournful. She moves, sad,
like

like the mist of showers, when the sun is dim in his cloud, and the valley of streams is silent. A roe bounds on the heath; he steals below them towards a small stream. His brown fides, at times* appear thro' the green rank ferns.—' Colgar, give me that bow; I have learnt to pierce the deer.'—He gave the bow. She drew the string. Colgar fell.—She returned to Lara, and the soul of her father was glad. The evening of his life was like the departure of the sun on the mountain of spring; like the leaf of autumn, when it drops in the silent vale. The days of Moràla on the hills were many; in death she rested, in peace, with her father.—Over Lara of streams there bends an oak. Below it are two beds. One, Ural, is thine; and thine, daughter of the bow, is the other beside it*."

I WENT with Gormallon to the shore. Below its rocks we found a youth. His arm, issuing from the light mail, rested on a broken harp, and the staff of a spear is beside him. The moon, rising like a half shield, looked through the beard of the rock on his bended head. In the midst of his grief it waved from side to side, like a pine in the sigh of winds.

WHO is this, said Gormallon, that dwells lonely in the midst of night? Art thou of the host of Dorla; or from the halls of Conar?

I AM, (replied the youth, trembling as the leaf in the blast, as the grass in the stream of winds,) I am of the bards who lived in Conar's halls. Dorla heard my song, and spared me. Hereafter I
may

* The bards always adapted the subject of their songs to the situation of their hearers. The resemblance between the case of Ural's daughter and the daughter of Conar, was what gave rise to this, the happy end of which would give the old man some gleam of comfort.

* Gor-

may remember that he carried the arms from Selma, and spread the battle on the fields of Duthona.

“REMEMBER him thou mayest *; but what canst thou say in his praise? He stole the arms from Selma; and came upon Conar, when his friends were absent. His arm is feeble in danger, but strong when none is to oppose. He is a cloud that rises only in a calm; a dark mist, that never lifts his head from the fen, till the winds of the vale have retired.---But the storm from Morven shall overtake this cloud; Fingal shall scatter his beauty.”

“I REMEMBER the king,” said the youth, “since he was in the halls of Duthona. The voice of Ossian I remember, and the stately warriors of Morven. But Morven is far from Duthona.”---The sigh stopt his words, and the bursting of his grief was heard, like the breaking of ice on Lego, or the mountain winds in the cave of Ardven.

“FEEBLE † is thy soul,” said Gormallon; “thou art not of the halls of Conar, nor of the race of his bards. They sung of the deeds of battle. Their souls swelled with the joy of danger, as swell the white sails of Fingal under the blast of Morven. Thou art of the friends of Dorla.—Go, then, thou feeble arm, and tell him that Morven pursues him. Never more shall he see the deerless hills of his heathy desert.”

GORMALLON, reproach not the youth, said I. The soul of the brave, at times, may fail; but it returns again, like the sun when the storm is over. He smiles from the height of his course, and the clouds are scattered. The green-headed pine waves no longer

* Gormallon speaks.

† The most of this paragraph, and part of that before and after it, are selected from the traditionary tale of the poem. The dialogue is there carried on to a greater length, but appears too frivolous to be translated.

longer its spiry top; the blue face of the sea is calm; and the glittering vales, in the midst of sun-beams, rejoice.

I took the youth by the hand. I brought him to Carril of songs, till the strife of battle should be over; for the light now shone on the arms of Dorla. His people, speechless and pale, behold the strength of Morven and the sword of Conar. They stand in their place like the benighted hunter on Cromla, when the terror of ghosts furrounds him. The cold sweat bedims his eye: his trembling knees forbid his flight; and down he sinks in the midst of his journey.

DORLA beheld the white eyes of his people, and the big tear hangs forward in his own. The spear of Morven glittered in his hand as he spoke.

“ WHY stand we in pale silence here, like these gray trees around us? The warriors of Morven are few; and our numbers may prevail. They may have their fame, but have not we also fought with heroes? Or, should any think of flight, where is the way to our ships, but through the midst of the foe?—Let us then rush on in our wrath, that our arms may be strong, and the joy of our friends be great when we return to the streams of Caruth.”

* * * * *

CONAR struck the shield of Duthona. His scattered people heard it. They lift their heads from their secret place, like the streams of the heath of Cona, which in the day of drought hide themselves under the stones of the brook; but when the warm showers descend, they come forth from their retreat; and, roaring, rush from every hill.

WE met: we fought; and Dorla fell by the spear of Conar. The
king:

king saw the foe brought low. He came in his mildness, and spoke to the people of fallen Dorla.

“ FINGAL delights not in the fall of his foes, altho’ they make him unsheathe the sword. Return to your land; and come not again to Morven, nor to the sea-beat shore of Duthona. Short is the wintery day of the people that lift the sword against Fingal. A pillar of smoke that comes across the tempest is the life of those who fight with the warriors of Morven. Return; and carry the fallen Dorla to his land, that the white hand of his spouse may rear his tomb, and her tearful eye behold his ghost, in the vapour of mist, on Caruth.—Why didst thou rise so early from thy rest; spouse of the fallen Dorla? What dost thou there, leaning on thy gray rock, with thy locks wandering in the drops of dew. Why travels thy eye on the distant wave; these are not the sails of thy love? Thou seest but the foam that breaks round the sporting whale on the bubbling deep.—Murmuring Caruth hears the sighs of the fair, and its banks learn the name of Dorla. Her two children lean to their mother’s knee. They see the round tear hang on her cheek. They lift their little hand to seize the bright pearl. ‘Why,’ they say, ‘does our mother weep; and where slept, last night, our father?’—So perhaps, Ossian, is thy Everallin now anxious for thee. She leads thy little Oscar to Morven’s brow, that she may view the distant sea. He tosses his bulrush spear before him, and looks stern over the little shield of woven reeds. Think of them, my son, and spare the warrior, who, like the unhappy Dorla, leaves behind him a weeping spouse.—Alas, Dorla, why art thou so early fallen!”

Evirallin! Oscar! ye beams of joy which are now no more! How can Ossian touch the harp or sing of war, when your lovely forms

forms shoot, like falling stars, across his soul? O that I were a companion of your blue course, light-travellers of the mountains on high! When shall our ghosts meet in clouds, and glide in the evening gale, when its dusky wave scarce bends the top of pines on Cona? When shall we lift our unhorn heads in other lands, like stars of night in the heathy desert? O that it were soon! that my bed were made in the down of clouds! What the bed of heath is to the weary hunter of Lona, that is the tomb to the heavy bard. I will sleep. Gray stone, wilt thou and the song preserve then my name? No; the season of thy age, O stone, will come, and thou wilt sink down with me to the place where the weary repose on their lowly bed of earth. The stranger will lean on his spear, and ask for thy place; but the sons of little men will not know it. Light of the song, canst thou shew the stranger the place; canst thou tell where sleeps the gray stone of the bard? No; like me, thou art old; the mist of years hath closed upon thy light. Our memory shall pass away like the tale of Duthona, which already is dim on the soul of the bard.

THE people of Dorla ride in silence over the deep. No song rolls before them on the wave. The bards lean their heads upon their harps. Along the wet strings wander, through tears, their gray hairs. The mariner loses, in the mist of thought, his course. The rower, fighting, stops in the midst of his stroke.—Ah! children of grief, remember your steps are on the deep. The storm and the night are behind you.

WE come to the halls of Conar; but the chief is mournful. The sigh lifts the mail upon his breast. It rises like a wave when it folds the storm in its bosom. The light of his eye travels not in

A a

its

its wonted brightness through his hall; it is dim as the winter-sun, when the thunder-shower rides, in its own dark cloud, before it.—None says to the chief, “Why art thou sad?” For, absent is that star of night; the bright, soft-looking eye of Minla.

FINGAL beheld the darkness of the chief, and covered his own grief under the plume of his helmet. “Carril,” he softly said, “where is thy soul of song? Come, and with thee bring thy harp.”

CARRIL comes, bending gray on his staff. The voice of the harp is in his hand. Behind him walks the young bard from the shore of night: but his light mail falls to the ground. A white hand rises to cover the spreading blush. Whose hand is that so white? whose face, through wandering locks, blushes so mild?—“Minla,” cried Conar, “is it thou!”—Her arms in silence fold themselves about his neck.—The soul of the aged returned, as the sun when the storm is over. He gave the fair to Gormallon; and we spread the sails, with songs, for Morven*.

* This is among the few ancient Galic poems which have a happy conclusion, and on that account deserves to be preserved. The ancient bards, no doubt, employed their muse in celebrating joyful as well as mournful events. But, as melancholy tender scenes are most apt to make a lasting impression on the memory, the latter are often remembered when the former are lost and forgotten.

D E R M I D*:

A P O E M.

THE A R G U M E N T.

THIS poem opens with an address to the valley of Cona, in which its present silence is contrasted with its former busy scenes. Of these the story of Dermid's killing a wild boar of an enormous size, is singled out. After Dermid had killed this boar, he is desired by Connan, who bore him a grudge which the poem accounts for, to measure his length, with his bare soles, against the direction of the bristles on his back. Dermid, it seems, thought it might be a reflection upon his valour to decline the request. He complied; but the consequence proved fatal.

Graina, Dermid's wife, having been alarmed by the story of an old man whom she had met, after parting with Dermid, ran to his assistance with a spear, and arrived just as that which he had was broken in his encounter with the boar: but she herself being wounded by a random shot in the course of the chase, sits down near enough to be witness of the death of her beloved Dermid. Both are interred in the same place, and their elegy sung by the bards.

HOW peaceful, this night, art thou, O vale of Cona! No voice of thy hounds, no sound of thy harps is heard. The sons of the chase are gone to their rest, and the bed has been made for the bards. The murmur of thy stream, O Cona, is scarce perceived: the breeze shakes not the dew off thy bended grass.

A a 2

The

* Dermid, the son of Duino, is frequently mentioned in other poems of Ossian, and much celebrated in the tales of later times. These, mixing their marvellous with the original poem, have ren-

dered it in a great measure absurd and extravagant. But they are for the most part of so heterogeneous a nature as to be easily separated.

† Cia

The gray thistle hangs over thy bank its sleepy head; its hairs are heavy with the drops of night.—The roe sleeps, fearless, in the booth of the hunter; his voice hath ceased to disturb her. She sees his tomb, amidst green ferns, before her. Light-leaps over its mound her little kid. He rubs with his horn the moss from its gray stone; and on the soft heap, when tired of play, he lays himself down to rest.

VALE of Cona †, how art thou changed! And thou, hill of Golbun, how quiet is now thy heath! Thou coverest thy head with thy dark veil of mist; and slumbereest in the noon of day. No voice of the hunter, no cry of the hound, travels along thy dark-brown side to awake thee.—I move forth when all is calm; I lean my gray head on my spear, and listen if I may hear the echo of thy rocks. But thou art silent, O Golbun, in thy bed of clouds: no voice of thine is heard; save when thou repliest to the sportive cry of the deer, when evening has half-hid the sun in the wave of the west. Then, thou dost reply; but thy words are few: thou soon composest thyself again to thy slumber.

THOU wert not thus quiet, O Cona, when the king pursued thy deer, and made thy stream shake between its woody locks; nor was thy silence such, O Golbun, when the son of Duino pursued thy boar, foaming like Lora in his winding course.

LISTEN

† *Cia tianthaich thu nochd a Glean-caothan?*
Gun ghuth gaohair thu, 's gun cheol, &c.

The *Glean-caothan*, or *Cona*, of Ossian has been supposed by some to be Glenco in Argyleshire; and by others, Strathconan in Murray. Both seem to be at too great a distance from the scene of this poem, if we may rely on tradition, which

places it in *Strigaid* near Kintyre. What appears most probable is, that Fingal often shifted his habitation for the convenience of hunting, and might give several other places the same name with that of his principal residence.

—*parvam Trojam, simulataque magnis*
Pergama.

LISTEN, son of Alpin, to the tale; thou wilt pour its light on the dark stream of future years.

THE morning was calm on Cona. Mountains saw in Ocean their gilded heads. The son of the deer beheld his young branches in the stream, when the sound of Fingal's horn is heard. Starting, he asks his mother what it means. She, trembling, bids him fly to the desert.—

“THIS day,” said the king, “we pursue the boar, the deadly boar of Golbun.”

* * * * *

WE sent the sons of the chase to the hill. Their cries, as they climb, are deep and loud. Golbun with all its woods resounds.

THE sound rose on Dermid's ear, as he lay in the cave of his rest. As a mountain-stream in the midst of rain, so leapt his soul with joy at the voice of the chase. “My red spear, where art thou? and where art thou, my dark bow?”

Nor so glad was Graina in her cave, to which she had retired with her love from Connan's hate. The dark soul of Connan had loved Graina; but Graina gave her heart to Dermid. “Heed not,” she said, “the cry of the hounds; the chase of heroes is not awake on the hill.”

“FAIR is thy form, my love; and like the bloom of trees in spring

† Some repeat here a small fragment called *Nàs Seilge*, or “The manner of hunting.” As this poem is wholly a hunting adventure, it is probable these verses ought to have a place in it, if their incorrectness did not forbid it. The most accurate of them are the following, which denote their armour to have been nearly

the same as in going down to battle.

Gun ar n eide* 's gun ar n airm
Cha rachamaid a sheilg nan cnoc;
Bhiodh luireach oirn 's ceann-bheairt chorr,
'S da shleagh mhor ann dorn gach fir.
Bhiodh sgia main' air a gheibhe' buaidh,
'S cloidhe cruaidh gu sgolta cheann,
Bogha cruadhach agus iughair
'S ceogad guineach ann am bogh.

spring is thy beauty; yet this day I must leave thee, with thy child, in the cave. I must mix with heroes on Golbun."

AND wilt thou leave me, said Graina, loveliest of men; wilt thou leave me, thou light of my soul in darkness? Where is my joy but in the face of Dermid? where is my safety but in thy shield of brass? Wilt thou leave me, thou fairer than the sun when he smiles, after the shower, on the leaf of the birch; thou milder than his evening beams, when they play on the down of the mountain? Thy son and I will be sad, if thou art absent, Dermid.

"GRAINA, dost thou not remember the moans of the crane, as we wandered early on the hill of our love *? With pity, thou didst ask the aged son of the rock, Why so sad was the voice of the crane? 'Too long,' he replied, 'he hath stood in the fen; and the ice hath bound his lazy foot.—Let the idle remember the crane, lest one day they mourn like him.'—Graina, I will not rest longer here. Fingal might say, with a sigh, 'One of my heroes is become feeble.'—No; king of Morven, the soul of Dermid is not a stream that will fail; the joyful murmur of its course shall always attend thy steps. Rest thou in thy cave, my love; with night I will return with the spoil of roes.

HE went, swift as the path of an arrow, when it whistles thro' the yielding air on its two gray wings. Graina climbs, pensive and slow, the hill, to view the chase of roes from her rock. The light of her countenance is mild, but dim; like the moon in the night of calm, when it moves in silence through the clouds, and seems
the

* 'S moch a ghoireas a chorr

Air an lon ata 'n *Slia'gaoil*,

Slia'gaoil, "the hill of love," is still the proper name of a mountain near Kintyre,

said to have been the residence of these lovers, and to have received from them its name.

† The

the darkened shield of a ghost, hung on high in his own airy hall *! She meets a son of age in the woods. Bending, he weeps over a gray stone. "Here," he said, "sleeps the spouse of my love; here, I reared over her the green turf.—Many were our days on the heath. We have seen one race, like the leaf of autumn, pass: we have seen another lift in its place its green head, and grow old. We have turned away our foot from trees, lest we might crush them in youth; and we have seen them again decay with years. We have seen streams changing their course; and nettles growing where feasted kings. All this while our joy remained; our days were glad. The winter with all its snow was warm, and the night with all its clouds was bright. The face of Minalla was a light that never knew a wane; an undecaying beam around my steps. But now she shines in other lands; when, my love, shall I be with thee?

"THERE too, fair maid, thou beholdest another tomb. Under it is the cold bed of the son of Colla. It was made by the trembling hand of his father. By the boar of the woods my son was slain. He fell near the cave of his dwelling. His spouse was preparing the feast for his return; 'I go,' I said, 'to look for his coming.' I went; I heard his cry; I ran with the short steps of age to assist him. Hanging by my robe, his son attends. We find his father dead. The boar had broke his spear in twain; and the sword in his cave was left. His child takes him by the hand, and bids him rise. 'Why,' he said, 'shouldst thou sleep without?'—Alas! he hears

* The original word (*Ealachainn taibhse*) signifies properly "the armoury of a ghost." The whole comparison, which is exceedingly beautiful, as well as fanciful, is subjoined.

Bha a braghaid gu seimh a 'soillse'
Mar ghealach ri oidhche shaimhe;
Si gluafad ro na neula balbha,
Mar sgia air ealachainn taibhse.

hears thee not; for the tusk of the boar hath torn him, and his sleep is heavy.—This morning sounds Fingal's horn to pursue the fatal boar. But its voice reaches not the ear of Tuthal; the morning that shall rouse my son is distant. O Tuthal, why hadst not thou thy father's spear?"

"MOURNFUL," said Grainia, "is the tale of Colla. My tears in a stream could flow on the tombs of thy spouse and son. My tears could flow; but I must fly with speed. My Dermid pursues the fatal boar; who knoweth, my love, but thou mayst need a spear? Colla, keep thou this child till I return. I fly to my love with a stronger spear."

DERMID had come to the vale of Cona, like a fair light that grows in darkness. We rejoiced in his presence, as the mariners when the star, that long concealed itself in its cloud, looks again on their dark course, and spreads its beam around. The voice of songs is on the deep; and seals lift up, through trembling waves, their heads to listen to the music.

We climb Golbun of green hills, where the branchy horns of deer are seen in mist, and where lie thick the mossy beds of roes. From echoing rocks we start the boar, the red deadly boar of Golbun. We pursue him with all our dogs; but he leaves them weltering in blood behind.

Who, said the king, shall kill the boar of Golbun; the boar that is red with the blood of heroes; that hath slain so many of our hounds? His shall be a spear, the gift of a king; a shield with all its studs; and the herbs of the secret stream, to heal the hero's wounds.

MINE,

MINE, replied Dermid, shall be the gift of the king; or I fall by the bristly foe, and lose the fame of the song.

HE spoke, and flew over the heath in the gleam of steel. His course was like the red cloud that bears the thunder on its wing when the fields of Fingal are silent and dark. Quaking heroes lift from Morven their eye, and behold in sky the fight of ghosts. It is Trenmor hurling his wrath against Lochlin's sons, when they come to pursue his airy deer.

ALREADY the roar of Dermid is on Benala. From Benala he flies to Benlora. Now the hill of Ledroma shakes under his feet; and now the hill of Elda.

THE boar flies before him, but not so fast. His path is marked with wreaths of foam. His noise is like the white tumbling of waves on the isle of storms; like the falling of rocks amidst the groves of the desert.—See! they ascend Drimruath: the spear of Dermid almost reaches the foe. It falls heavy on its sides; it marks them with red streams. It sounds like the fall of trees, with all their aged branches, on a rock. The vales along their winding banks resound.—But see! with fury red-glaring in his eye, he turns, as the stream of flames on a hill when the dark winds have changed.—As it were a bulrush or slender reed of Lego, he grinds the hard, tough spear of Dermid*.

“O THAT thou wert near me, Grainia! that my love would come from her cave, and bring me the spear of battle!”

B b

BRING

* The original of these two lines is a most remarkable *echo to the sense*. The one line is full of that harsh, grinding sound which it describes, and the other as smooth as the bulrush or reed of Lego of which it speaks. The contrast between them has also a fine effect.

Chagnadh e a shléaghan readh riadh'
Mar chuile na Leige, no mar luschaig.

† It

"BRING it I do, my Dermid. From my cave I saw thy distress. Thither again I return. There look for me, my love, when the strife on the hill is over."

AND what though he find thee too, hapless maid ! Alas ! the days of thy years are run.—An arrow in its wandering flight had met the fair in the course of the chase. In her breast of snow it is lodged ; but she conceals it with her robe from Dermid.—Dear hast thou paid, O Dermid, for that weapon in thy hand ; who shall tell thee what it cost thee ?

WITH all his terrible might, the chief lifts his spear. Like a meteor of death, red-issuing from Lano's cloud, a flood of light, it quick-descends. The head is lodged in the rough breast of the boar : the shaft flies, over trees, through air. His sword is in the hero's hand ; the old companion of his deeds in the hour of danger. Its cold point pierces the heart of the foe :—The boar, with all his blood and foam, is stretched on earth †.

WE rejoiced to see Dermid safe ; we rejoiced all, but Connan. Measure, said that little soul, the boar which thou hast slain. Measure him with thy foot bare ; a' larger hath not been seen.

THE foot of Dermid slides softly along the grain ; no harm hath the hero suffered.

MEASURE, said Connan, the boar against the grain ; and thine, chief of spears, shall be the boon thou wilt ask.

THE soul of Dermid was a stranger to fear ; he obeyed again the voice of Connan.—But the bristly back of Golbun's boar, sharp
as

† It is from this event that the clan of the Campbells, who derive their pedigree from this Dermid, have assumed the boar's head for the crest of their arms. In the compositions of the later bards they are often called *Sliochd Dhiarmid an Tuire*, or, "The race of Dermid who slew the boar."

as his arrows and strong as his spear, pierces with a thousand wounds his feet. His blood dyes the ground; it flows in wandering rills through the grafs. The herbs of the mountain are applied; but their virtue fails.—Dermid falls, like a tall pine, on the heath †.

AH! how quick the colour forsakes his cheek. It was red as the fruit that bends the mountain tree*; but now it grows pale as the withered grafs. A dark cloud spreads over his countenance, as thick mists that veil the face of the wintery sun, when the evening comes before its time.

“THE shades of night gather on my eyes. I feel the decay of my strength. The tide that flowed in my heart hath ebbed away. Behind it I remain a cold, unmoving rock.—Thou shalt know it, Graina, and be sad; ah! the pain of death is to part with my love.—But the shades of the night are gathering over my soul. Let Dermid sleep; his eyes are heavy.”

WHO shall tell it to Graina?—But Graina is nigh. She leans

B b 2

be

† The death of Dermid, in the manner it is here told, will appear somewhat odd. It is probable he had received some other wound in a more mortal part; and that some of the poem, where his death may have been better accounted for, is lost. The current tradition with regard to this passage is, that Dermid was vulnerable in no part but in the sole of his foot, and that the great art of Connan was to get him wounded there. Whether this account of the matter, though common, be very old or very satisfactory, is a point in which the translator is not concerned.

* In poems chiefly depending on tradition, there must be in different editions

a considerable variation. Their comparisons frequently differ; but they are always beautiful, and have the same scope. Thus, for instance, instead of the above simile, many have here another of the same nature, taken from the strawberry:

Ged' bh deige do ghraidh na t futh

Bhiodh air uillín cuic 's an fheur;

Dh' fhas i nua d'í-nealach uaine,

Mar neul fuar air ceart na grein.

—Such as may, here, miss the dialogue concerning *Cuach Fhinn*, or the medicinal cap of *Fingal*, will remember that it is of so different a complexion from the rest of the poem, that no apology needs be made for rejecting it as the interpolation of some later bard.

beneath the shade of a tree. She hears the moans of her love : they awake her slumbering soul. Hark ! she pours her faint song on the calm breath of the breeze. See ! her blood and her tears wander on her white breasts, like dark streams on the mountains of snow.

“ My love is fallen ! O place me in his bed of earth ; at the foot of that rock, which lifts, through aged trees, its ivy head. The sheeted stream, with murmuring grief, shall throw its waters over our tomb ; but O ! let it not wet the dark-brown hair of my love.—The stream still murmurs by ; some day its course may wash away the mound. The hunter, as whistling he goes careless by, will perceive the bow of Dermid, and say, ‘ This is Dermid’s grave.’ His spouse perhaps may be with him. Near the bow, she will observe this arrow in my breast ; and say, as she wipes her eye, ‘ Here was Grainia laid beside her love.’—Musing, they move silently along ; their thoughts are of the narrow house. They look on each other, through glistening eyes. ‘ The fondest lovers,’ they say, ‘ must part at last.’”

—“ But stop, hunters of the mountain, and give the mighty his praise. No mean hunter of a little vale was he, whom you have passed, so careless, by. His fame was great among the heroes of Morven ; his arm was strong in their battles. And why should I speak of his beauty ; shall his comeliness remain with him in the tomb !—His breast was as the down of the mountain, or the snow on the tree of the vale, when it waves its head in the sun.—Red was the cheek, and blue the eye, of my love. Like the grass of the rock, slow-bending in the breeze, were his brows ; and sweeter than the music of harps or the songs of groves, was thy voice to virgins,

virgins; O Dermid!—But the music of thy voice is ceased, and thy spirits can no more be cheered. The burden of my grief is heavy: The songs of Morven's bards cannot remove it. It will not listen to all the larks that soar in the lowly vale, when the dewy plains rejoice in the morning sun of summer.—But what hath Grainia to do with the sun of the morning; or what hath Dermid to do with summer? When shall the sun rise in the tomb? When shall it be summer in the grave, or morning in the narrow house? Never shall that morning shine, that shall dispel our slumber, O Dermid *!"

WE

* Cha dealruich a mhaidein gu *La-bhrath*

A dh'fhogras do phramh, a Shuinn!

The word *la bhrath*, in its literal and primary sense, signifies "the day of burning," which was the Druidical term for the dissolution of the world *by fire*, as *gu dilinn* was their name for the alternate revolution which they supposed it should undergo *by water*. In a metaphorical sense both words came to denote *never*, or "till the end of the world," which for many ages back has been their only acceptation. Hence, a translator is naturally led to render these and the like words by their present meaning, without adverting to their etymology or ancient signification. This is one reason why more religious ideas do not appear in the works of Ossian, which, if examined, in the original, will be found to contain many allusions to the Druidical tenets. The word under our present consideration, tho' it is now universally understood to signify *never*, was used, long after the introduction of Christianity, to denote the dissolution of the world by fire, as among the Druids from whom it was borrowed. In that

famous prophecy of St Columba, to which his monastery owed so much of its repute, it has this meaning, *Seachd la' ro an bhrath*, &c. "Seven days before the dissolution of the world, a flood shall cover the other kingdoms, but Iona shall swim above it." Ossian, who uses the word frequently in his poems, probably affixed to it this idea, much oftener than that of *never* as we do at present. In the original the word is always more emphatical than can easily be expressed in a translation. An instance or two will make this obvious to such as understand both languages. One occurs in the battle of Lora, where Bofmina says to Er-
ragon,

"S, nìm faicear a d' thalla *gu bhrath*
Airm agh'or mo dheagh Rì."

"Never shall they behold in thy halls the victorious arms of the king."

In the first book of Temera, Fingal mourning over the fallen Oscar, says

"Gu *la bhrath* chon eirich Oscar!"

"Never more shall Oscar rise," is scarce so emphatical.

We laid the lovely pair in their bed of earth. The spear of his strength, with his bow, is beside Dermid ; and with Grainia is laid the arrow that was cold in her breast. Fingal bended on his spear over their grave. A dark stream descended on his cheek. His bards saw his grief. Each assumed his harp, and gave the name of the dead to the song.—Heroes, mournful, stood around. Tears flowed from the eye of hounds, as they rested on dark-brown shields at their feet.

“ PEACEFUL, O Dermid, be thy rest ; calm, son of Duino, be thy repose, in thy dark and lowly dwelling !—The din of arms is over ; the chase of the boar is ceased ; the toil of the day is ended ; and thou, heedless of the return of the morning, art retired to thy slumbering rest.—The clang of the shield, the noise of the chase shall not awake thee. No ; Dermid, thy sleep is heavy !

“ BUT who can give thy fame to the song, thou mighty chief ! Thy strength was like the strength of streams in their foam : thy speed like the eagle of Atha, darting on the dun trembling fawn of the desert. In battle, thy path was like the rapid fall of a mountain stream *, when it pours its white torrent over the rock, and sends abroad its gray mists upon the wing of winds. The roar of its stream is loud through Mora’s rocks. Mountain-trees, with all their moss and earth, are swept along, between its arms.—But when it reaches the calm sea of the vale, its strength is lost, and the noise of its course is silent. It moves not the withered leaf if
the

* The following lines, altho’ defective, being only one of the editions from which this passage is made up, are so beautiful as to deserve their room :

Bha do neart mar thuilteach uisge,
Dol a’ios a chlaoidh do namh ;

Ann cabhaig mar iolair nan-spear,
No fhead eise a’ ruith air fail’.
A thriath threum a b’ allie leadan
Ma son shleasgach tha ’m Fheadan,
Gu ma fannach a raibh t’ or-chul,
Fui’ chudrom na foide re !

* In

the eddying wind doth not aid it.—On eddying winds let thy spirit be borne, son of Duino, to thy fathers ; but light let the turf lie over thy beauteous form, and calm in the grave be thy slumber !

“ A VESSEL rides the surgy deep*. It bounds from ridge to ridge. Its white sails are spread to the wind. It braves the fury of the storm.—‘ It is the son of Duino’s!’—Yes, stranger, it was the son of Duino’s ; but now the son of Duino is no more. There, he hovers, a faint form, above ; and the boat is half-viewless beside him.

“ THE horn sounds on the mountain. The deer start from the moss of rocks ; from the banks of their secret streams. The unerring dart of the hunter pursues them on the heath. One of them is arrested in the midst of his course. Panting he tastes the cooling fount. His knees shake, like the reedy grass in the stream of winds. He falls as he climbs the bank. His companions attempt with their head to raise him, but in vain ; they are forced to forsake him and fly.—They fly, but the hunter pursues them. ‘ His speed is like the speed of Dermid!’—Alas ! stranger, it is not he. The son of Duino sleeps in his lowly dwelling, and the hunters horn cannot awake him.

“ THE foes come on with their gathered host. A mighty stream meets them in their course. Its torrent sweeps them back, and overturns their grove of spears.—‘ It is,’ saith the son of the stranger, ‘ one of the warriors of Morven ; it is the strength of Dermid!’—The strength of Dermid, replies his companion, hath failed.

At

* In this elegy of the bards over Dermid, the various accomplishments of that hero are remarked ; and appear the more striking from their being put, for the most part, in the mouth of strangers.

At the foot of that ivy rock I faw, as I paffed, his tomb. The green fern had half-hid the gray ftone at his head. I pulled its rank growth away: Why fhouldft thou, vile weed, I faid, obfcure the fame of the hero?

“ A YOUTH comes, whiffling, acrofs the plain. His arms glitter to the fun as it fets. His beauty is like that finking beam, that fpreads around him its rays; and his ftrength is like his beauty. —The virgins are on the green hill above; their robes are like the bow of the ftower; their hair like the trefles of the fun, when they float on the weftern wave in the feafon of calm. They admire the ftately beauty of the warrior, as lightly he moves along. —‘ The youth,’ they fay with a figh, ‘ is like Dermid.’---The memory of the fon of Duino rifes on their foul, as a beam that breaks on blafted Mora, through the torn edge of a dusky cloud. In forrow they bend their heads. The tears fhine through their fpreading locks, like ftars through the wandering hair of the moon. They fall like the tears of Oflian when they flow for Ofcar of Lego.

“ THE children of youth are toffing their little fpears. They fee the hero on the plain. ‘ There comes Dermid!’ Their reedy fpears are thrown away, and they forfake the fhield of willow. Their fteps of joy are quick to meet the maker of their bows. But they fee it is not he, and in mid-way they ftop. Slow, they return to their play; but the noife of their harmlefs battle is not heard, for their little fouls are fad for Dermid.

“ THE voice of mufic and the found of the harp are heard in Fingal’s hall. The benighted traveller is charmed as he approaches. A moment he leans his breaft upon his ftaff, and, fide-
long,

long, bends his listening ear.---' It is Dermid!' he says; and hastens to overtake the song.---A beam of light, clear but terrible, comes across his soul. He makes two unequal strides; in the midst of the third he stops. 'Dermid is no more!'---He wipes with the skirt of his robe his eye; and, sighing, slowly-walks along.---It is the voice of the bards thou dost hear, O stranger; they are pouring the fame of Dermid on future times; clothing his name with the nightly song. The chief himself, in Selma thou shalt find no more. He sleeps with Grainia in the cold and narrow house. On Golbun's heath thou wilt find it, at the side of the stream of roes.---A rock, dark-bending with its ivy mantle above, shelters from storms the place. A mountain-stream leaps over it, white, and murmuring travels on. A yew spreads its dark-green branches nigh: the deer rests undisturbed at noon beneath its shade. The mariner leaning to his mast, as he passes on the darkly-rolling wave, points out the place, and tells his mates the woful tale. The tear bedims their eye. They cannot mark the spot: they heave the deep note of grief, and sail to the land of strangers. There, they tell the tale to listening crowds around the flame of night. The virgins weep, and the children of youth are mournful. All day they remember Dermid and Grainia; and in the dreams of their rest they are not forgotten."

AND often you descend to the dreams of Ossian too, children of beauty. Often you possess his thoughts, when he sits, alone, at your tomb; and listens if he may hear the song of ghosts. At times, I hear your faint voice in the sigh of the breeze, when I rest beneath your green tree, and hang my harp on its low-bending branch.

C c

branch.

branch.---But Offian is a tree that is withered*. Its branches are blasted and bare ; no green leaf covers its boughs. From its trunk no young shoot is seen to spring. The breeze whistles in its gray mofs : the blast shakes its head of age.---The storm will soon overturn it, and strew all its dry branches with thee, O Dermid ! and with all the rest of the mighty dead, in the green winding vale of Cona.

How peaceful art thou, O vale of Cona ! Thy warriors and thy hunters are all gone to rest. Let the bed be also made for the bard ; for the shades of night thicken around him, and his eyes are heavy.

* No image could better represent the forlorn condition of the poet than this which he has chosen. The words, too, in which he describes it, are full of that soft and mournful sound which is expressed in the Galic by the diphthong *ao*, and the triphthong *aoi*; sounds which, so far as I know, are peculiar to the Galic lan-

guage, and highly congenial to the more soft and mournful feelings.

Tha mife mar gheig na h aonar,
Si gu mofgrin maol gun duileach,
Gun mhaothan ri taobh, no ogan,
Ach ofna bhroin a' caoi' na mullach.
'S fogus an doinion, a sgaoileas
A crionach aoid' air feadh a ghlinne.
Mu leabaidh Dhiarmaid s an laoch lughar
Aig Gaothan nan luban usine.

FINAN

FINAN AND LORMA*:

A P O E M.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE children of Morven, having given Ossian a description of two ghosts which they supposed they had seen in the clouds, are informed of their names;—the manner of their death;—the grief of their father Murno;—the ceremony of his resigning his arms in old age, when his race became extinct;—with the song of the bards on that occasion;—and the episode of Turloch and his children, which had been introduced to comfort Murno and the lover of Lorma.

WHAT is it you behold in the face of night, children of the sportful days? Is it the snow that rests white on Morven's top; or the gray smoke of the halls of air? Do you behold the daughter of night pale in clouds; or is her face seen in the calm stream in Cona's vale? Hear you the mournful spirit of the mountain; or do you listen to the voice of ghosts in the gale of winds?

“MORVEN, O bard, is white. The moon is in the stream: the spirit of the mountain speaks; and the voice of ghosts is in the gliding gale. But in none of these is our thought. Our eye is in

C c 2

two

* Often called *Dan chlanna Muirne*, per to remember, that Murno was the father of Finan and Lorma; that Ardan was *his* father, Torman his bard, and Dunalva the place of his residence. As the number of names in this poem may render it somewhat intricate, especially near the beginning, it may be pro-

two clouds; their mist in moon-beams is white: their steps are from Alva of roes; on the wind of night flows their streamy hair. Two dark-gray dogs attend the one. His bow in his dim hand is strung.---From the white side of the other runs a coloured stream; her long robes seem stained with blood. Her face is sad, but lovely; and the tear is still on her cheek.---Keep off, O blast, a little while, till we behold the forms.---But thou rollest them together in thy dark cloud; and scatterest, like gray smoke, their limbs.---Over the rushy vale, over the hill of hinds, they wander on the wings of their rustling mist.---Bard of other times, dost thou know the forms; canst thou tell the children of Morven their names?"

THE years that are past return: the soul of Ossian is full of the song. Its voice comes like the sound of waves; it travels on the evening gale after their force on the distant shore is broke, and the stormy winds are laid.---Children of Murno, I remember your song; its sound has been long from Selma.

CHILDREN of youth, your eyes, like mine, may one day fail. You may ask the children of the years to come, what they see in the face of clouds. "We see," they will say, "two youthful ghosts; and beside them, in his dun cloud, bends their aged father. They will then ask of you the tale of the ghosts of night. Listen to it from Ossian, lest you should say, "We know not."

WHO comes trembling on the staff of age? His eyes dwell in dark, red-edged clouds: within them is the shower of tears. His gray hair is on the gale of winds, and the sigh of his voice is mournful.---Murno, why so sad? Are not the eyes of Finan flames in battle; lifts he not the shield with heroes? Are not the steps of Lorma also on the hill of roes; bends she not the bow with virgins?

gins? Why then, Murno, is thy face of age so sad; is there no found in the harp of Torman?

“Nor without cause is Murno sad; not without cause is his countenance mournful. Finan! thou liftest the shield no more in battle. Lorma! thy steps are not on the hill of roes with virgins. My children! in the tomb you are both asleep; and the soul of your father is sad. It is sad in the midst of harps, like a cloud of mist in the valley of the sun, when the hills expect the shower.

“TORMAN, take that moony shield: that sword which is a stream of light; that spear, tall as an oak of the vale; and that burnished helmet which shines so bright. They are the arms which Ardan wore: the arms that were worn by the father of Murno. From a chief of other lands he won them, when first Trenmor and he, in one day, lifted against foes the spear. ‘Let the first of your fields,’ said their fathers, ‘be marked with fame. From his first name grows the renown of the hero *.’—

“THEY rushed to the war of Clutha, like two young eagles of heaven, when they first pursue in their rushing course one young fawn on Dora. Many were the heroes that rolled in dust before Trenmor; and Ardan won these arms from Duthorran. But thy race, O Ardan, shall no longer wield them. Only two trees, tall on the banks of Alva, were they! The mossy branches of one lone tree is bare; and the green youth of another, like the thorn flower in the sun, is withered. The son is laid on the tomb, and the father bends over the narrow house. The first blast shall lay him low; and the race no more is found.—Torman, hang in Ardan’s hall the
arms.

* This line is a common proverb in Galic, used to recommend an early attention to character. *‘Se cliu duine a cheud iomra.’*

arms of battle. The feeble in the days to come may see them, and admire the race that has failed. They will try to lift the arms, but cannot : ' Mighty,' they will say, ' was the race of Alva.'

" Two bards bore to Dunalva the arms, and bade them remain to future times. One shield was hung, a darkened moon, on high. Another, with the head of a spear, was laid deep in its bed of earth. Nor retired the arms of heroes to their rest, without their own peaceful song.

" DESCEND, said the bards, O Ardan, thou rider of Morven's mist in the storm ; descend from thy cloud, and behold thy arms ! Let the dim smile of joy, between thy tears, arise ; for thy race brought no stain upon the fame of thy steel, though now they shall no longer lift it. Thy spear, in their hand, always shone where the battle was darkest ; but the blood of the feeble was never a dark spot on its blue edge. Thy shield was a rock, which the lightning of battle often tore : in no feeble hand was it ever lifted. Murno was a storm that tears the oak ; and a flame that consumes the grove was Finan.

" DESCEND, Ardan, from thy mist ; guard the shield of thy race in Dunalva †. Let no little soul touch it ; let no hand of the cruel come nigh it. Such were not the lifters of this shield ; the boun-
ders on this spear ; the heroes of the race of Ardan.—Keep off, son of the little soul ; what hast thou to do with the arms of heroes ?

Retire

† It was probably from poetical fights or antique notions of this nature, that the belief sprang, which still prevails in the Highlands, of every family-seat or house of distinction being inhabited by one or two *genii*, who are supposed to superintend the affairs of it, and to punish ser-

vants for their misdemeanours. What gave still more weight to this opinion, were the corrections frequently bestowed on servants in the dark ; the effects of which sometimes shewed, that they did not proceed from such " unreal mockeries."

Retire to thy secret stream, where was never heard the noise of the spear, the echo of the battle! There, live with deer; grow gray with the beard of the thistle. Sleep in the same mossy bed with them in death; thy fame unsung, thy tomb unknown, thy race unnoticed. One by one, they fall around thy tomb, unheeded; as ferns die in the deep cleft of the rock, where they grow in secret. They grow, they decay, they die: no traveller shall ever say, Behold them!—From the desert comes a wintery blast; on its cloudy wing sits Death, pale, grim, unlovely. Thousands are his quivers; and many are his bows, always strung. Through the secret vale as he passes, he beholds in his bed the lazy man. He draws the string. The arrow silent flies. It strikes; it kills; but its mark is not seen in the breast, like the death that is dealt by the steel of the valiant, in the fields of fame. Heroes raise over the feeble no tomb: bards sing no song: virgins touch no harp. The little soul now hangs in the bowels of cold, dark mist; like the fish locked in the ice of Lano's stream; and now, it is tossed on fenny clouds, the sport of rushing winds. His course is often with the vapour of death, that hovers on marshy lakes, and sends forth its blasts, like secret arrows, to bring death to nations.—Never are his steps on green woody hills, on sunny plains with heroes*.

“ BUT such were not thy race, Ardan; the lifters of thy brown shield in war.—Guard it on high, thou dweller of storms; frighten the feeble when they approach it in thy hall.—But the hall shall
one

* This passage alludes to the notion which the Celtic tribes had of a future state; the punishment of which, in their opinion, consisted chiefly in thick darkness and extreme cold. The utter contempt in which they held such as led an idle and inactive life, appears from their consigning them to this region of horrors after death.

† Bo-

one day be no more. Like a gray tree which the blast hath overturned in the flood, it shall fall; and its top shall be wet in the midst of Alva. The crowded stream shall change its course. Through the ruin is its wandering way. The thorn had been lifting there its flowery head: the brier was green betwixt the mossy stones. The heath and the fern shook there, in the breeze of night, their heads, and formed a bed for the dun roes.—The stream came. It washed away the mound of earth. In the face of the broken bank juts out the dark-crufted shield. The hunter observes it, as he bounds over the stream in his course. ‘What dark orb,’ he says, ‘is that; dim as the circle within the new horns of the moon?’—He looses away, with his spear, the earth: his soul travels, glad, through the ages that have been. Lifting his head he looks around, and sees the palace of other years in its own green tomb. ‘The dwelling of heroes,’ he says, ‘has been here; the hall of kings in the years that are no more.’—Yes, stranger, thou standest in the hall of kings: touch not their dark-brown shield, if thou art not of the race of heroes. For that was the shield of Ardan.—Ardan! thou dweller of the tempest’s wing, descend from thy mist: descend on thy rustling blast, and receive thy arms.—Guard them in the hall of Dunalva †.”

SUCH was the song of the bards, when they hung on high the arms of Murno. But the soul of the chief still is sad. The sigh of his breast is heard, at times, like the sound of a lonely wave, or the sigh of the gale in the grass of the tomb.—We bring him to

Selma

† Besides this solemn resignation of several passages in the ancient Galic arms made by the last person of any poetry, that every hero, at a certain age race to the ghosts of his fathers or tutelary spirits of his family, it appears from the hall,” and decline the toils of battle.

Selma in the silence of grief. Two tombs, as we go, lift their green heads before us on the heath. On earth between them Murno lies. None said unto the chief, Arise. All lie on the grass around, and listen to the mournful tale of his children.

“MORNING rose on the isle of Croma, and the horn of my son was heard. Three gray dogs leap around him, and lift their ears with joy at the sound of his quiver. They bound in their skiff through the strait, and pursue the dark-brown deer of Croma. With evening we see the skiff return. The waves arise on the deep. The skiff is seen at times on their white tops: but, sudden-sinking, it disappears. In vain we look for it again; it is concealed in the sea, or in night.

“My soul trembled for my son. But old as I was, what could I do?—I bade the years that were past return; but they heard me not. The path of their course was distant, and the voice of Murno was feeble. My daughter too shrieked, and shook my aged soul, as shakes the blast the dry leaf of the desert.—‘O my brother! my brother of love! in the storm art thou lost?—Art thou lost, my brother!’

“To the shore she rushed. Distracted, wild were her looks. The sea had shrunk from a dark rock. To its tops are the steps of the maid. Her looks and her cries are towards the deep. ‘My brother, my only brother of love, dost thou not hear the cry of thy sister?’

“DIM appears a dark spot on the foamy top of a wave.—‘Is that the wandering ooze; or is it thou, my brother?’ He heard her voice; and with one faint note he replied. Fear and joy divide, by turns, her soul.—Two of the gray dogs had reached the shore:

D d

the

the third, in the foam of waves, was lost. The two heard the voice of Finan fail. They bound again into the surgy deep. They return, with Finan, on the third wave; but one breathes on the beach his last.

“ LORMA bore her brother to the rock. ‘ Here,’ he faintly said, ‘ Let me for a little rest, for my strength is failed.’

“ SHE wrapt her robe about his breast, and made his pillow of the weeds that were drier.

“ HE sleeps. The maid in silence bends over his face. She bids the waves be still, and the noisy path of their whales be distant. And distant be your rustling course, ye winds of the mountain; and soft be your gliding, ye streams from the vale of hinds. Quiet, through the bosom of woods, be the noise of your torrents: and silent, through rustling leaves, be your steps, ye dun-bounding roes. Let my brother of love sleep, for his eyes are heavy. Soft, Finan, on the dark rock be thy sleep; calm, my brother of love, be thy slumbers.

“ BUT, ah me! his face is pale; it is wan, as the moon in her gray watery cloud. The countenance of my brother is unlovely. Perhaps he still dreams of the troubled deep; for his brow is dark. It is clouded as the face of children in their unfettered rest, when their dreams are of the coming of wolves †.— Mothers of the tender soul, do you then awake your children from their slumbers? Do you bid their sleep depart, and scatter, as mist
on

† Mar ghnais leimibh, ‘s e’n fuaig gun fhois,
A broadar air maddal’ nan coilean.

Some have quarrelled with Ossian for not making mention of the wolf, so frequent at that time in his country. But these

gentlemen ought to remember, that a great part of Ossian’s works is lost, in which mention may have been frequently made of this and many other things which we now desiderate.

on the gale, the fear of their dreams? Yes, you do awake them: but I will not awake my brother of love till the morning come, for his strength is failed; his sleep is heavy.—But the flies of night disturb thee, Finan. How shall I keep them away? Thy face, with my own, I'll softly cover; but I will not dispel thy slumber.—Ah! my brother, thou art cold.—Thou hast no breath—thou art dead! my brother! O my brother!

“HER cries ascend on the rock. As I approach they strike my ear. The sea grows, and she perceives it not. She loads with her cries the wind. The beating on her white breast is loud; the howling of the gray dog is wild. My soul melts on the shore with grief. Often it bade me rush to the relief of my child. But the voice within me said, ‘Murno, thou art old and feeble; the days of thy cleaving the deep are over.’

“THE gathering wave lifts my children from the rock: it tosses them on its breast to the shore. There dark rocks meet them with their force, and the side of Lorma is torn. Her blood tinges the wave: her soul is on the same blast with Finan.

“SAD, O my children, have you left your father: the name of parent I will hear no more. I stand on the heath, a blasted oak; no more shall my branches flourish. Autumn is dark on the plain. The trees are bare on the brown heath. Their leaves with the spring shall return; but no green leaf of mine shall lift, in the summer-shower, its head. The race of Alva is failed, like the blue smoke of its halls when the beam of the oak is decayed.—Great is the cause of Murno's grief; for one night hath seen him without a child. Thy tomb, O Finan, is here; and here thy grave, O Lorma!”

THE soul of the aged was sad. The burst of his grief still arose. We remain silent in our place, like ghosts when the winds are calm; like a stream of ice when it sleeps between two banks of snow, and shews to the pale moon its glittering beard.

BUT who comes, wandering, wild on the mountains, like the roe that hath lost his companion among the woody streams. His yellow hair wanders on the dark breath of winds. Unequal are his steps. Frequent the burst of his grief: the sigh of his breast is mournful. It is like the voice of a blast in a cave, when the waves, before it, toss themselves in a storm.—It is Uran, the bender of the bow; the love of thy youth, O Lorma! He had come to Dunalva in the night of storms: but the halls were silent and dark. Two blue stars had used to shine there. But now he saw them not; set were the eyes of Lorma.

“LORMA, where dost thou rest? My love, where are thy slumbers? Has the night seized thee in the lonely chase; has darkness hid thy steps in the desert? Daughter of the bow, where dost thou rest? O that I knew thy place; then should I haste to find thee! Dost thou sleep at the foot of a gray rock; is thy bed of moss on the bank of streams? Ah me! if it is, the breasts of my love will be wet: they will be wet, and the night is cold.—It is cold: but peaceful be thy rest, dweller of the soul of Uran; let thy dreams of me be lovely.—

—“DISTURB her not, ye spirits of the night on your blasts; ruffle not her hair, ye winds; blow not away that smile on the lips of my love.—My love is calm in the midst of storms; for the thoughts of her soul in the season of rest is Uran.—Glide smoothly by her, ye streams of the valley of roes: skip quietly, ye dun fons
of

of the mountain, through your bush. Eagles of the hill of hinds, let the rustling of your wings, in the desert, be distant. See that ye disturb not the dreams of my love; that ye awake not the slumbers of Lorma.—Sleep on, O Lorma; let not the murmur of the stream, nor the rustling of the storm in trees, affright thee. Sleep on; with morning, I will come and awake thee. I will awake thee, but my voice will be soft. It will rise in thy ear like the hum of the mountain bee, when he travels on the wing of the breeze at a distance. The voice is lost at times: the brown son of the wing is drinking the dew of roses, where they grow on their secret banks.—Sleep on, O Lorma; and if the slumber of night descends on the soul of Uran, rise thou in the dream of his rest, and let the look of thy eye be lovely!”

He rested on the mossy bank. Sleep half-descended on his soul. The murmur of Alva in his ear was less. The moon still looked through the windows of his rest; for only by halves were his eye-lids closed.—Before him twice arose the fighting Lorma. She was like a white cloud before the moon, when her light is dim, and her countenance sad. Uran knew the ghost of his love. He wandered, mournful, wild on the heath. The voice of Murno reached his ear: he perceived the two green mounds of earth. He dropped the bow. He fell. But why should I tell the grief of Uran?—Silence was long on the hill. The bard of Morven, at length, took the harp. We leaned forward our breasts upon its sound, and listened, as he sung with the voice of grief.

“TURLOCH lived at Lubar of streams. In deeds of fame his hair grew white. Strangers knew the way to his hall: in the broad path there grew no mountain-grass. No door had he to his gate.

gate. ‘Why,’ he said, ‘should the wanderer see it shut?’ Turloch was tall as the oak of his vale. On either side, a fair branch lifted its green-growing head. Two green trees smiling in the shower, and looking through rainbows on the sun, were the two children of Turloch. Heroes admired the beauty of Migul; and virgins, with secret pleasure, beheld the steps of Althos. ‘He is stately,’ said the strangers, ‘as the son of Turloch; and she is fair,’ they said, ‘as the maid at Lubar’s rolling waters.’

“LONG did the years of Turloch glide smoothly by. Their steps were silent as the stream of his vale. Joy smiled in the face of the chief, like the sun-beams on the brow of his hill, when no cloud travels in the road of heaven*.

—“BUT ever-varying, as the face of the sky, are the days of man upon his mountains. The storm and the calm roll there in their course; the light and the shade, by turns, are there.

“MIGUL one day went forth to the chase. In her white hand was the bended bow; and two gray dogs bounded, through the morning dew, in her steps. Swift as mists that fly through heaven when the winds are high, they pursued on hills the deer. Migul drew the string. Her winged darts were unerring as death. On the brown heath the sons of the mountain, gasping, fell.

“THE huntress sits on her rock. The thunder is heard on the hill. The clouds gather like night. The streams descending from the

* Where different images are used in the different editions of the original, they are often joined in the translation, when the sense and poetry admit of it. In other places, however, some of the original is omitted, as here, where a part of the pas-

sage seems to be borrowed from an encomium of Ossian upon his beloved Oscar in another poem.

Bha do chroidhe mar ghathaibh greine
S do spierad mar chanach fleibhe
Be do nos bhi aoibheil failteach
Mar na rofaibh air gach faire.

the mountains are white, and Lubar rolls in foam. How shalt thou cross it to thy home, thou trembling maid?

“ Althos saw his sister approach. He knew where two bending rocks almost met above the stream. An aged oak spreads its arm across: often had the trembling hunters of other times crept along its moss in the day of storm. Here stood Althos, above the deep. ‘ Give me, my sister, thy hand.’—Both shake upon the bending branch: it quakes; it cracks; it breaks; it falls!

“ TURLOCH was kindling the fire in his hall. My daughter from the hill, he said, is wet.

“ A CRY strikes his ear, as he fans the flame. Sudden-starting, he issues forth. He sees his two children shoot along the stream; they are clung to one aged branch.

“ HE cried; but his cries were vain. Night, descending on the vale was dark. The rocks till morning heard his moan; and deer, awaking at the sound, leapt wildly from Lubar’s banks.—Day found him wandering there; and night again overtook him in the same place. But his children at the dark stream he found not; and sad he returned to his empty house. Long did it echo to his sighs; and long did he wander at the dark stream, when the children of the vale had retired to rest.

“ THE shield of battle, at length, was struck. Turloch heard, as he wept on Lubar’s banks, the sound. He sailed with his people to Ialin; but they landed, as they passed, in Ithulmo.—There, two lovely beams met them on the rock; benders of the bow, when bounds before them the dun roe. The eye of Turloch darkened with grief as he beheld their beauty, in the midst of the children of the isle.—‘ Two such lovely beams were you once in my sight, my chil-

children! Such was thy stateliness, O Althos! and such thy beauty, O Migul!"

"THEY heard the voice of their father, on the isle to which they were borne, by the oak, on the wing of streams. They heard it, and sprang to his arms with joy.—The face of the aged again was bright; and gladness returned to Lubar."

"THEY children, O Murno," added the voice of age*, "are, like those of Turloch, only lost for a season. They are only gone before thee on their own stream to the land of the happy. There thou shalt soon behold them lovely, lifting their young heads in the midst of heroes. Already, their course is in the fair mists that wander on the face of the moon; when she looks pale through clouds, and shines in the stream of Alva. Let, therefore, the grief of Uran be forgot, for there he will find his Lorma. Let the tear of the red eye of Murno be wiped off, for there he will find his children."

THE grief of the mourners calmed by degrees. Uran was like a tree, which, though the storm is laid, still shakes its waving head: and the bosom of Murno still heaved above the figh; like waves which toss themselves, at times, after the winds have retired.

C A T H-

* The original of this passage is beautiful, and deserves here a place. The translation may appear somewhat fuller in one or two of the expressions, owing, here and in some other places, either to the abruptness of the original, or to the admission of an epithet or idea somewhat differently expressed in other editions. Such as will take the trouble of comparing any of the other Galic passages with the English, will please extend this remark to them also: it will account for a few

inconsiderable variations which they may meet with.

Is amheil sin air an fhrith' fein
Dh'imich, re seal, clanna Muirne;
Ach gheibhear iad ann lannse nan Treun,
Mar iurain soibhin 's an doire uaine.
Cheana chitear an caoin-chruth
A' snamh doilleir feach Gealach na h oidhche,
Tra sheallas i nuas fuid' fmail
Air Alva nan ceime cinine.
Caig, Urain, mata do bhron,
Sna biodh do dheoirs', a Mhuirne, co snitheach;
Sgach aon, air a steud-shruth fein,
Ann deigh's a chairdean ag im'eachd.

C A T H L U I N A:

A P O E M *.

THE A R G U M E N T.

ANNIR, the daughter of Moran, having been loved by two intimate friends, Gaul and Garno, resolved to get rid of the last by a stratagem.—In the disguise of a stranger, she brought him a challenge from Duaran, who, she alleged, was his rival, and whose prowess she thought he would not choose to encounter. But being disappointed in this, and resolved to get rid of Garno at any rate, she delivers the same message to Gaul, confident that his superior valour would give him the victory.—The two friends met in the night, and fell by mutual wounds. The issue of her plot affected Annir so much, that she could not long survive it.—The poem opens with some reflections suggested by the scene where they were all buried, and concludes with their funeral song.

I HEAR the murmur of the brook; I hear its fall over the rock.
Lead me, son of youth, to that oak which spreads its branches
over the stream. At its foot, three gray stones lift through wi-
thered grass their heads, and meet the falling leaves. There sleep
the friends of Ossian. The murmuring stream they hear not: the
rustling leaves they heed not. In the chamber of their rest, the
steps of our approach will not disturb them.

E e

MANY

* In the district of Lorn in Argyle-shire, there is a lake which is now called Loch-avich, but anciently Loch-luina, or Lochluana. Near it was probably the scene of this poem. Many places in its neighbourhood are still denominated from Ossian's heroes.

The *son of youth*, to whom this piece is

addressed, is supposed to be the same with the *son of Alpin*, so often mentioned in some other ancient poems. Tradition relates many stories of him; among others, that he took down in writing all the poems of Ossian as they had been repeated to him by that old and venerable

bard.

MANF, son of youth, were the valiant on the hills of Morven, in the days of our joy. But the blast came and spoiled our wood of its leaves. It overturned our lofty pines on their green mountains. It whistled with its wintery noise through our palaces, and marked its dark path with death. The season of our joy is a sun-beam that is past; the voice of gladness in our hall is a song that hath ceased; and the strength of our heroes is a stream that is no more. The owl dwells in our fallen walls, and the deer graze on the tombs of the valiant. The stranger comes from afar to beg the aid of the king. He sees his halls, and wonders they are desolate. The cow-herd, careless, whistling, meets him on the dusky heath, and tells him the heroes are no more. "Whither," he says, "are the friends of the feeble gone; and where is Fingal, the shield of the unhappy?"—They are gone, O stranger, to their fathers. The blast hath laid the mighty, like the tall pines of Dora, low; and the sons of the feeble grow in their place. Thou seest on every hill the tombs of those who helped the unhappy. Thou seest their stones half-sunk, amidst the rank rustling grass of the vale. The heroes have made their bed in dust; and silence, like mist, is spread on Morven.

BUT the voice of Cona's harp, ye mighty dead, shall be heard in your praise. The stranger, as he passes, may attend perhaps to the song. Listening on his spear, at times, he stands. The bard sees him not, but his sighs are often heard. Humming the tale he goes away, and, mournful, tells it at the streams of his land. Young bards shall hear it as they bend, silent, over their listening harps. On future times they will pour the song.

WE are come to the place; but where are the stones that mark
the

the abode of my friends? Lift your heads, ye gray mossy stones; lift your heads, and tell whose memory you preserve. Why shrink you in your moss, forgetful of the mighty below you?—But I will not forget you, companions of my youth. Your fame shall remain in my song, when these mouldering stones shall fail.—Often did we shine together in steel, and pour death on fields, like roaring streams. Mighty were ye then, my friends, though now so low! Mighty were your deeds when you strove together here. Listen to the tale, son of youth, and let thy soul be kindled to deeds of fame.

GAUL * and Garno were the terrors of the plain: their fame was in the land of strangers. The strength of their arms was unmatched, and their souls were steel. They came to the aid of Moran. They went to the hall of the chief, where it lifts its gray head, in the midst of trees, in the green isle of Innisluina.—The daughter of Moran seized the harp, and her voice of music praised the strangers. Their souls melted at the song, like a wreath of snow before the eye of the sun. The heroes burned with equal love to Annir; but it was on Gaul alone that she rolled her blue eye. Her soul beheld him in the dreams of her rest; and the streams of Innisluina heard, in secret, his name.—The daughter of Moran turned away her eye from the brow of Garno; for she often saw the fire of his wrath arise, like a dark flame when clouds of smoke surround it.

THREE days the heroes feasted. On the fourth they pursued the chase on the heath of Luina. The maid followed at a distance, like

E e 2

a

* Who this Gaul was is not certain. the poem of Gaul the son of Morni, and He is probably the same with him who begins with
speaks in that dialogue often foisted into

A righbhin is binne ceol,
Ghuais gu maida 's na gabh bron, &c.

a youth from the land of strangers. She followed to tell the words of fear, that Garno might leave the land *.

THE sun looked down on the fields, from beyond the midst of his course, and the panting roes still lay in the shade of the rock. Garno sat on Caba's rugged top. His quiver is by his side, and Luchos lies at his feet. Beside him is the bow with the head of horn, unstrung. He looks round for the deer; he sees a youth. "Whence are thy steps," said the dark-brow'd chief; "and where is the place to which thou art bound?"—

"I AM," replied the youth, "from the mighty Duaran, chief of the halls of Comara. He loves the daughter of Moran; but he heard that Garno wooed his love. He heard it, and sent me to bid thee yield the fair; or feel, this night, the strength of his arm in battle."

"TELL that proud son of the sea, that Garno will never yield. My arm is strong as the oak of Malla, and my steel knows the road through the breast of heroes. To Gaul alone, of all the youths on the hill, I yield the right-hand in battle, since he slew the boar that broke my spear on Elda.—Bid Duaran fly to his land: bid him retire from the daughter of Moran."

"BUT thou hast not seen Duaran," said the youth. "His stature is like an oak; his strength as the thunder that rolls thro' heaven; and his sword as the lightning that blasts the affrighted groves. Fly to thy land, lest it leave thy withered branches low, and strew on the heath thy blue arms."

"FLY thou, and tell Duaran I meet him.—Ferarma, bring me my shield

* For most of this and the two following paragraphs, we are more indebted to the tale than to the poem, which is defective.

shield and spear: bring me my sword, that stream of light.—What mean these two angry ghosts that fight in air!—The thin blood runs down their robes of mist; and their half-formed swords, like faint meteors, fall on sky-blue shields.—Now they embrace like friends. The sweeping blast passes through their airy limbs. They vanish. I do not love the sign; but I do not fear it. Ferrarma, bring my arms.”

THE maid retires. She is grieved that Garu will not fly. But she heard him say that to Gaul he yielded in battle. To the hill of his chase are therefore her steps.—The hero leans on his spear: a branchy deer lies by his side, and his dogs are panting around. His looks are towards the green dwelling of Luina. His thoughts are of his lovely Annir; and his voice is heard in her praise.

“FAIR is my love as the bow of heaven: her robe is like the beam of the morning. Mild is the blushing of thy face, O Annir, as that sun, when he looks through the red-tinged clouds of the west, and the green tops of the mountains smile. O that I saw thee on the hill of deer, in all thy beauty; that I saw thee like the young pine in the vale of Luina, when it softly waves its head in the gale, and its glittering leaves grow in the shower of the sun!—Then would my soul rejoice as the roe, when he bounds over the heath in his speed; for lovely art thou in the eye of Gaul, thou daughter of car-borne * Moran!”

“AND

* Ait mar eilid an sonaich,
Na deann air raon nan rua 'bhoc,
Tha m' anam fein, tra chi mi do dhreach,
Inghean Mhòrain nan each 's nan carbad.

Car-borne is always a title of distinction in the poems of Ossian. That the ancient Britons and Caledonians used cars.

and chariots of various kinds, is a fact so well attested by Tacitus, Mela, Cæsar, and other authors of credit, that none has room to ask, Where could they drive them? Their chariots of war were generally armed with scythes, and called *cobb'ain*.

"AND art thou Gaul," said the approaching youth? "Thy Annir may be lovely, son of Ardan; but dire is the battle thou must fight. Duaran loves the maid: on that hill he awaits thy coming. Yield, Gaul, thy love to Duaran."

"My love I will yield to none. But tell thou that chief to come to the feast to-night. To-morrow he shall carry away the gift of a friend, or feel the strength of a foe."

"THOU mayst spread the feast but thou must eat it alone, for Duaran comes only to lift the spear. Already I see his distant steps. He stalks like a ghost on that dusky heath. The beam of his steel supplies the departing light; and the clouds brighten their dark-brown fides around him. Hark! he strikes his shield. Its sound is the death of heroes."

GAUL covered himself with his arms, like a ghost that clothes his dark limbs with meteors of light, when the mountain-heads are shaking in thunder. He moved to the hill from which he heard the sign of battle. As he went he hummed a careless song. He thought of his Annir, and the deeds of his former days.

HERE, son of youth, the warriors met. Each thought his foe was Duaran: for night was dark on the hills, and this oak concealed the sky. Dreadful was the wrath of the heroes; dreadful

was

cobb'ain, (the *covinus* of the Latin writers), from *co-bhuain*, a word which signifies "to hew down on all sides." Of this kind seems to have been the famous car of Cuthullin in the 1st B. of Fingal, and the 4000 which Cæsar ascribes to Cassibelanus.—Besides this, the ancient

Caledonians, as they inhabited a mountainous and uneven country, used for state a sort of litter borne between two horses in a line, and somewhat in the shape of a bier. Hence, in Galic, the word *carbaid* is used either to denote "a bier" or "a chariot."

was the echo of their swords, as they mixed on high, like streams of lightning, when they issue from dark clouds of many folds *. The hills reply to their shields. Luina trembles, with all its woods. The heath shakes its head; the roes are afraid in their dreams; they think the chase is already up, and the thought of their sleep is of danger.—Still louder grows the noise in their ear; they think the approach of the hounds and the twang of the bow are nearer. From their midnight slumber they start; their face is towards the desert.

TERRIBLE and long was the strife of battle.—But the shield of Gaul is cleft in twain: and the blade of Garno flies in broken pieces. Its sound is like the whirlwind on Ardven, when it tears the heath from its roots, and rustles through the leafy oak.

GAUL stands like a whale, which the blue waves have left bare upon a rock. Garno, like the return of a stormy wave, rushes on to grasp the chief. Around each other they clasp their sinewy arms; like two contending spirits of heaven, when all the storms are awake. The rocking hills shrink with fear from the thunder of the sons of the sky; and the groves are blasted with their lightning.—Thus from side to side the warriors bound. Rocks with their earth and moss fly from their heels. Blood, mixt with sweat, descends in streams to the ground. It wanders through the green grass, and dyes the passing rill.

ALL

* Another edition of the poem describes this combat somewhat differently, but with almost equal energy, in the following lines;

Bheall iad ann fin air a cheile,
Gu ernaidh cuidreach is do-bheumach,

Chaidh an leig air chrith fua'cafaibh,
'S chaidh teine da'n armaibh glafa.
Bhuailleadh iad gu neart 'ar dobbidh
Mar dha-bhuinne ri cruaidh cho'rag.
Cho-shreagair na creagan 'sna beannan
Do airm nan Curine calma.

ALL night they fought. With morning light the son of Ardan falls on earth, and his wide wound is exposed to day. The helmet falls from his face. Garno knows his friend. Speechless and pale he stands, like the blasted oak, which the lightning struck on Mora in other years. The broad wound in his own breast is forgot. The red current flows unperceived. He falls beside his friend.

"BLESSED," he said, "be the hand that gave the wound! My body, O Gaul, shall rest with thine, and our souls shall ride on the same fair-skirted cloud. Our fathers see us come: they open the broad gate of mist: they bend to hail their sons, and a thousand other spirits are in their course. We come, mighty ghosts; but ask not how your children fell. Why should you know that we fought, as if we had been foes? Enough that you know your sons were brave. But why have we fought together; why have I heard the name of Duaran?"

GAUL heard the voice of his friend. But the shades of death are on his eyes: they see but dimly half the light. "Why did I fight," he faintly said, "with Garno; why did I wound my friend; why did I hear of Duaran? O that Annir were near to raise the gray-stone of my tomb!—Bend down, my fathers, from your airy halls, to meet me!" His words were heard no more. Cold and pale in his blood he sunk.

ANNIR came. Trembling were her steps: wild were her looks: distracted were her words. "Why fled not Garno? why fell my Gaul? Why was heard the name of Duaran?" The bow dropped from her hand: the shield fell from her breast. Garno saw her, but turned away his eye. In silence he fell asleep.—She
came

came to her lovely Gaul. She fell upon his clay-cold corse. There the fair, unhappy mourner was found ; but she would not be torn from her love.

ALL day, the sun, as he travelled through his watery cloud, beheld her grief. All night, the ghosts of rocks faintly answered to her sigh. On the second day her eyes were closed. Death came, like the calm cloud of sleep, when the hunter is tired upon his hill, and the silence of mist, without any wind, is around him.

Two days the father of Annir looked towards the heath : two sleepless nights he listened to all the winds. " Give me," on this morning he said, " my staff. My steps will be towards the desert." —A gray dog howls before him : a fair ghost hovers on the heath. The aged lifts his tearful eye ; mournful he spies the lovely form. —But, Moran, I will leave thee ; I cannot stay to behold thy grief †.

* * * * *

HERE, son of youth, we laid the three. Here we reared their gray stones. Our sorrow was great for their fall ; and our bards gave the mournful song.

" WHO, from the dusky hill with his armour of light ; who stalks so stately over the plain ; who strides in terrors over the heath ; who rushes into danger and defies the brave ? Who is it but Garno the bold ; Garno of the awful brow : the chief of spears ; the terror of the field ; the strength of a thousand streams ?

" BUT who meets him, with stately steps and yellow locks ? Like

F f

the

† Some editions enlarge here upon though very tender, appears either to be Moran's extreme grief on learning the not genuine, or not correct, it is omitted. death of his daughter ; but as the passage,

the sun, when he looks through a thin watery cloud, he smiles in the hour of danger. Who rolls before him the storm of battle, and thunders through its wide-skirted fields?—Hark! his voice is the sound of waves in a storm; his steps like the shattered rocks, when hills shake their heads on the heath of the desert.—It is Gaul of the fair hair and mild look; the son of Ardan of renowned deeds: the chief is mighty, but lovely.—O why was the name of Duaran ever heard, or the maid of Luina ever loved? Why fought two such friends in darkness?—Like angry ghosts in a storm, ye fought; like two green oaks, laid low by the storm of angry ghosts, ye fell.—The traveller passed by in the night; he saw them raise their lofty heads in the plain. ‘Fair trees,’ he said, ‘your growth is stately, and your leaf, on the bank of your own blue stream, is lovely!’—But he returns in the morning, and finds their green heads low; he sees their roots torn from the earth, and their branches in the foam of the stream.—The tear starts into his eye. ‘Each of us,’ he says, ‘will one day fall before the storm.’

“Low are your heads beneath the storm of night, ye warriors who were lately so brave! And pale is thy beauty, lovely Annir, in the place of thy silent repose! Mark, O maids of Morven’s streams, the day whereon the lovers fell. Let it be a day of sadness on Luina. Let no youth, on that day, pursue the dark-brown deer.

“O GAULO, warrior bold! Gaul, thou lovely hero! and Annir, fair and unhappy!—Whether you ride on the silent clouds, or turn the course of the tempest; whether you rest in the peaceful halls of your fathers; visit the cloud-robed hills of Morven, or haunt the

the green groves of Luina :—O let your love, your grief, and your wounds, be forgot ; and listen with joy to your fame in the song.—While harps remain, they will repeat your name ; and the last voice of bards shall praise you.”

SUCH was the song of the bards when we reared the tomb of the heroes. Often I sung it in our halls, when the dark day of their fall returned.

I HEAR the murmuring of the brook : I hear its fall over the rock : lead me back, son of youth, but forget not the fame of the heroes.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

CATHULA*:

A POEM.

THE ARGUMENT.

CATHULA king of Inistore, having invited Fingal to a feast in his palace of Carriethura, receives intelligence, at the time, of an intended invasion on his coast. Fingal removes his anxiety on that head, by reminding him of the fame of their fathers; which they would transmit, he said, to their children. Upon this Cathula laments his misfortune, in having lost, as he supposed, his only son, when a child. The bard relates in what manner; and Fingal comforts Cathula, by telling him his son may, possibly, be still alive.—

BEING informed in the morning, that Manos, a chief of Lochlin, had actually landed, they go forth to give him battle. The command is devolved upon three of their young warriors; but as they were like to be worsted, Fingal, Connal, and Cathula descend to their aid. The last, with some misgivings, encounters with a youth, whom he afterwards discovers to be his son.—

MANOS, being overcome, is reprimanded by Fingal, and dismissed on a promise of his never giving any further trouble to Fingal or any of his friends.—The poem is addressed to a *Dweller of the rock*; either a sequestered Culdee, or Druid.

OUR life is like the sun-beam of winter, that flies, between the showers, over the heath of Lena. The hunter, lifting his head upon his hill, beholds the beam, and hails the day of the sun.

He

* From the resemblance between the names of Cathula and Cuthullin, and both having a son called Conloch, many who repeat this poem, in place of Cathula, substitute the more familiar name of Cuthullin, and call the poem by the title of “*Mar mbarbh Cuthullin a Mhac*.”—tho’ it appears that Cuthullin died under the age of thirty, when his son was very young; and the other circumstances of the poem can relate only to the king of Inistore.—See Ossian’s poems of *Carriethura* and *Death of Cuthullin*. The edition here followed begins thus:

Mar

He hails it; but it is already gone. The, dun-robed clouds have drawn their shade over its path, and who^a can trace its footsteps? The leafless woods lament its departure; their branches sigh to every breeze; and the drooping herbs of the mountain wither.

THE sun, O woods, shall again return; and your green leaves, in his warm beam, will flourish. The season of your youth will come back, and all your bare boughs will rejoice. From the height of his beauty, the dweller of heaven will look down: he will smile through the thin sparkling shower, on the herbs that are withered. They also will come forth from their winter-house, and lift their green glittering head on the bank of their secret stream.—They will come forth from their dark house, with joy: but the dwellers of the tomb remain still in their place; no warm beam of the sun shall revive them.—But your memory, companions of my fame, shall remain; your deeds shall descend, a beam of light to future times, and be the tale of the years that shall come.—Hear, dweller of the rock, the tale of Inistore. Dim-gleaming, it comes on the soul of the bard. It comes like a faint moon-beam on the distant wave, when Lumon † fears the storm.

THE feast of Cathula was prepared, and Fingal raised the sail. The wind came down with its rushing noise from our mountains. Beneath its steps is the groan of oaks. On the deep is the roar of waves.

Mar bhoisge greine 's a gheamhra'
'S e ruith na dheann air raon Lea'na;
'S amhuil sin la'rh nam Fionn
Mar ghrian eidir-fheasach a' treigis.
Dh'aom noill chiar-dhu' nan speur,
'S bhuin iad an deo aoibhin on t sealgair:
Tha loma-ghauga na coill a' caoidh,
'S mao' lufrach an t fciabh a' fearga'
Ach pillidh fathad a ghrian

Ri doirre sgiamhach nan geug ar,
'Sni gach crann 'sa cheitun gaise
'G amharc ann aird ri mac nan speur, &c.

As several parts of this poem are supplied from the tale or *sgéulachd*, the narration is more prolix than it is in the general run of old Galic poems.

† Lumon; the name of a bay.

waves. Inistore †, dweller of the sea of whales, lifts through the low-hung clouds its green head, and beholds with joy our coming. The people spy our sails through mist, and gladness is in Carric-thura.

BUT who are these with the king, descending to the shore to meet us? One tall tree is gray; the other two young oaks are green, but their steps are stately.—Hail, Connal, from blue Togorma *, is it thou! Hail, yellow son of Rinama †, king of plains! And hail, thou son of Ruro, from the isle of boars!

“Let the feast,” said Cathula, “be spread, and the shell go round. Let the voice of harps and the songs of bards arise, that the joy of my friends may be great in my echoing halls. Cathula, O bards, is in the midst of his friends. This is the day of his joy. Let no shade obscure its beams; let no dark cloud, in its wandering course, pass over Carric-thura!”

SUCH were the words of Cathula. But how short, son of the troubled days ‡, is the dream of thy joy! It is like the short calm that comes between the inconstant blasts, in the night of the storm. The hunter lays down his head in his booth. His dreams of joy are beginning to arise: white-handed virgins are coming towards him with their harps: bards are beginning to give his fame to the song: shields sound, and his heart bounds with joy for the battle:

† Inistore, properly *Innis-ore*, or *Ork-innis*, “the isles of whales,” or Orkneys. The word *orc* is used in this sense by Milton:

————— an island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals and orcs and sea-mews clang.

* *Tonn-germa*: “the isle of blue waves.”

† *Ri' sa-ma*, “king of the plains,” or *Maiatz*. The Highlanders still call the low parts of Scotland *a mba'-thir*, the plain country.

‡ In this apostrophe the poet does not mean Cathula only, but man in general, whose chequered life he describes through the whole of this beautiful paragraph.

battle : fields of fame rife before him ; and he beholds, at times, the gleam of a thousand fpears.---But the blaft, in the midft of this gladnefs, comes. It fhakes above the booth its terrible wing, and the dreams of joy vanifh. The hunter lifts his head amidft the ftorm, and fays, “ Dreams of my love, why are you gone ; or why did you come to deceive me ? ”---The virgins were of clouds ! the voice of bards was but the wind of the heath ! the found of the battle was the thunder ; and the light of fpears the flame of heaven !

HUNTER of the heath, thy dream was fhort, but pleafant : and fuch a dream was thy joy, O Cathula !

THE feaft of Iniftore had ceafed. The blaze of the oak was paft its ftrength. Still, the heroes hear the fong around it ; while Cathula views the night.

“ THE fleeping fea is calm †. The fparkling ftars bend over it in the weft. They admire, in its fmooth face, their own beautiful form. They are like the young virgins, when they lean on the brink of their fecret fteam, and behold, with a fmile, the fhade of their beauty. A ruftling comes as, bent, they lie. They ftart. They look, confufed, around. They fee it is but the roe in the withered leaf ; but the blufh is on their face of love.---Some of the ftars are likewise feen to blufh ; it is the fign of blood, I fear.---But I will behold the face of the moon. She begins to lift, through trees, her half-unveiled head. Dim forms are on her beams. I perceive their limbs of fmoke.---I know thee, my father, in thy darkened mift. But tell me why ftirreft thou the leaf with thy figh ? ”

THE anfwer came only by halves to his ear. The wandering breeze,

† Cathula fpeaks.

breeze, in its fold, had rolled the other half away. He returns to the hall, but his face is sad. Fingal knew he had seen his fathers; and his were always the words of hope. His speech was like the sound of the harp, when the white-handed daughter of Toscar holds it.

“ In the dark years that have passed, a silent stream, to their own sea, our fathers trod together in the path of fame. Sarno, Colgar, and Comhal, were three lights that shone in every danger. The battle was rolled before them, as the dark, dusty cloud by the whirlwind’s blast, when some angry ghost sweeps it along the narrow vale. In broken columns it flies: it sinks behind the shelter of the woods, and hides its head in the moss of the desert.—The spirit careless rides through air, and pursues some other sport.—Thus strode the warriors. No concern was theirs in the day of danger. Thus they broke the ranks of Lochlin, when its hosts opposed them. And are not we their sons, Cathula; and shall our face be dark when dangers come? Our fathers would turn away their course upon their blast; no voice of theirs would descend into our dreams; nor would their hall open to receive our feeble spirit, when our gray head would fall, like the withered leaf in the unknown vale. We should fly, the sport of winds, in the dim, fenny mist of Lego.—No; chiefs of Togorma and Inistore, our fathers have left us their fame; and the mighty stream, increased with our renown, shall, like growing Lubar*, roll down to our children.”

“ AND long,” said Cathula, “ may the sons of Fingal rejoice in their father’s fame. May they brighten in its beams, in the

G g

dark

* *Lubar*, “ a winding river;” often mentioned in the old Galic poems.

dark ages to come, and the bard say in his song, 'He is of the race of Fingal.'—But to no son of mine shall my renown descend, a bright beam, to shine around him. Conloch, son of my love! that sad night, which tore thy mother and thyself at once from my arms, rises with all its stormy horrors in my view, and wounds afresh my soul. It rises before me like the sea of Inistore in that night of storms. The rocks hear the noise of its waves, and they shake, with all their woods. The spirit of the mountain roars along the fall of streams; and the dweller of Inistore fears his trembling isle may sink.—But grief stops the voice of Cathula. His soul is a stream that melts, when tender thoughts are warm within.—Let me hear the sad tale, O bard, from thee. It awakes my grief; but I love it."

* * * * *

I HEAR the din of arms in Icroma †. I hear, through its woods, the echo of shields. I see the blaze of swords, gleaming to the moon. I see the spear of battle lifted. The roe starts from his midnight rest, and Turlèthan * fears the danger.—But why art thou afraid, roe of the mountain? Why tremblest thou, Sgaro, in thy halls? Sora's king is strong, but the wind of the north is awake. Upon its cloudy wing Cathula comes, like a red angry ghost of night, when hunters tremble on Stùca. The ranks

† *I-croma*, "winding or crooked isle." The poem, which in this place is not entire, brings Cathula very abruptly to Icroma, in order to assist Sgaro; but the tales or *urfgaels* mention several previous circumstances, which it might be tedious, and not essential, to mention.—With the confusion and terror that attend war, as

described in this paragraph, the calm joy of peace is happily contrasted in that which follows. The narration of this expedition seems to be put in the mouth of Cathula's bard.

* *Tur-leathan*, "broad tower;" the name of Sgaro's palace in Icroma.

† This,

ranks of war are broken before him, as the mail of the spider before the blast. The mighty are scattered in his presence.—Sora, with the clouds of night, hath fled over the sea. He hath disappeared, as the path of his ship on the deep.—Sgaro, hang up thy shield; bring down thy harp; let the daughters of Icroma rejoice.

I HEAR the voice of songs in Icroma. I hear the echo of harps in its halls. The sword of war is sheathed. The shield is hung on the peaceful wall, a dark orb, like the inner moon; and the spear of battle rests beside it. The roe is glad on his rock. The virgins of Turlethan look, with joy, over their window. The sun shines bright. No cloud is on its beams. But the maids observe it not; their eye is on Cathula, moving in the light of his steel. They bless that beam of brightness, from whose presence the darkness of their danger retired. “Awake, our voice,” they say; “awake, our harps: let our song be Caric-thura’s king †!”

BUT who comes forth to meet the chief? Her steps are on the dew of the morning. The tear of joy hangs forward in her eye, like the tear of night on the bended grass, when it glitters in early sun-beams. Her face of beauty is half-concealed by the wandering of her fair locks. But the morning-beams look through them on the mild-blushing of her cheeks, as looks the sun on the budding rose, when its colour grows in the drops of dew.—Who can this be but Rosgala, the fairest of the maids

G g 2

of

† This, of the maids of Icroma, appears to have been a chorus-song; a species of composition very ancient, and still much used in the Highlands. The time of these pieces is adapted to the various exercises of rowing, reaping, fulling, &c. They greatly alleviate the toil, and inspire men with ardour to go through with it.

of Icrowa?—Sgaro gives her to the chief who scattered the cloud of his foes.—“Cathula, were ten daughters mine, Chief of heroes, I would say, be thine the choice.”

THREE years, on their eagle-wing, flew over the hills of Turlèthan. The hawk darting on his prey moves not with a pace so silent or swift. Cathula looks back on their course, as the awakened hunter on the space he travelled over in his dream. He wonders how soon they are past. “It is time to return to Inistore; to the streamy groves of Carric-thura.”

THE sails of Cathula are raised. Rosgala, by turns, is glad and sad. “Adieu, thou isle of my love; adieu, thou abode of my youth! My friends are on the shore: the roes look forward from their bushy rock.—But why should the tears of Rosgala flow? she goes with Carric-thura’s chief?”—Conloch, the young pledge of their love, is in her arms. Two streaks of light on a cloud are his fair brows. His little helm above them is of the fur of fawns. Lulled by the rocking of the waves, he sleeps. In the dreams of his rest, he smiles. He hears the buzz of mountain-bees, and thinks he is near their store of sweet. But it is not the buzzing bee, thou dost hear, O Conloch! it is the rising wind, whistling through the rattling shrouds.—But still thy smile is pleasant. Thou lookest like the flower of Lena, when the many-coloured rainbow adorns it in the day of the inconstant sun. The hunter, as, hastening to the shelter of some dark-bending rock, he strides along, beholds it with a sigh; for he sees the stormy shower, riding towards it on the blast: The pillars that support it are hail. “Flower of Lena, thou art lovely; but the tread of the storm is near thee.”

THE breast of Rosgala heaves under the broken sigh, white as
the

the foam of the wave, when the storm uplifts it, and darkness dwells around. The bright drop is in her eye; it falls on the face of Conloch. With the pressing of her lip, she wipes it away. He awakes and sees the storm. He wonders what it means; and, shrinking, clings to the bosom of Rosgala. She, over him, spreads her skirt, as spreads the eagle of Lora her dark wings, wide, over her young, when they shrink in their head from the hail, and hear the voice of storms.—“Fear not, child of my love,” said Rosgala; “for thy father is nigh us.”—Nor be thou thyself afraid, said Cathula; I know the sea of Inistore. Often have I rode its deep, when louder was the roar of its waves.—Rosgala asks for Inistore; but it is distant. The sea hides it behind its hills of foam.—Mixed with the noise of waves, rise, at times, the sighs of the fair.

Now descends, on the deep, dark-skirted night. The thunder is in her course. The streamy lightning bursts, dark-red, from her womb. Spirits feel its flames. Their shrieks are heard in mid-air. They rush to quench their half-burnt robes in the deep. The billows roar, with all their whales.—The moon hears the noise within her house of clouds, and she is afraid to lift her head above the hill. The stars wrap their heads in their mantle of Lano’s mist*. At times, they look, trembling, through the window of their clouds; but, quick, draw back their wandering hair.—They are like the hunter on the heath, who shoots out, at times, his head, but will not venture forth from his booth till the storm

is

* *The mist of Lano* seems to have been a proverb for any mist of the thickest and darkest kind.

is over.---Hunter of the roe of the mountain, thou art on the heath on shore ; O that Rosgala were there !

BUT what voice did you hear that night, ye rocks of Icruma ; when on the deep was she, to whose harp you often echoed ? Did you listen to the roar of waves at your feet, or to the thunder that rolled in the blasted head of your pines ? Louder than either of these, rose in your ear the cries of Sulingorma †. She is wildly-sad, for her daughter is on the deep with her child. She stands on the dark rock, careless of the beating storm. White billows breaking on the distant deep, deceive her oft for sails.—Mother of Rosgala, retire from the storm of night ; thy daughter does not hear thy cries.

RETIRING, she soon turns back to view once more the main. A wandering bark, descending into the creek, is half-perceived. Oh ! art thou safe, my child !”

“ WHAT voice is that on the rock ?” says the mariner ; “ my mates take down the sails.”

THE voice of joy mixed with fear again is up : “ Rosgala ! art thou safe ?”

“ IT is the cry,” says the mariner, “ of the fair ghost that we saw upon the deep ; behold it there !—Come, O ghost, on moonbeams to our dreams, when the night is calm, and the storm is over !”

SULINGORMA hears his voice, and sad retires. The rocks reply to the name of Rosgala.

BUT Rosgala is on the sea of Inistore. The straggling ray of a di-

† *Sulin-gorma* signifies “ blue eyes ;” *Rosgala*, “ fair countenance ;” *Cathula*, “ eye of battle ;” *Conloch*, (or *Giun-laoch*), “ mild or beautiful hero.”

distant oak travels there over the deep. Cathula beheld his love, like a fair virgin-ghost in its beam. In her arms he beheld his son. He looked like a star in the bosom of the bended moon, when her face is almost hid in grief, and the darkness of her countenance growing. He beheld them; but he was sad, and his half-stifled sigh arose. The passing breeze bore it to the ear of Rosgala.

"WHY that sigh," she said, "my love? The night on the deep is dark, but the storm will soon be over. The moon will come forth in her silent beauty; her steps on the mountain will be lovely. The stars will shew their blue-sparkling eyes in the clouds, and the winds will retire from the sea of Inistore. Nor is Inistore far distant: is not that the light of its halls?"

"LIGHT of the soul of Cathula, the storm will soon be past; and the light of Inistore, amidst blue, calm waves, arise. But what is night, or storm, or distance of Inistore, to Cathula; while he beholds the face of beauty, with all thy calm of soul?—Let me behold the face of my love, O beam! and I will bless thee, tho' thou dost come from Sora's hall; though thou hast brought me so nigh his shelving rocks."

Too nigh them art thou brought indeed, O Cathula: on their edge thy skiff, in two, is divided. The chief climbs the oozy rock. Rosgala and his son are in his arms. But no shelter, save from cold sea-weeds, is there. It is, at times, the habitation of seals.

"THE land, my love, is nigh. My strength, I know, can reach it. On its shore I may find some boat that shall convey us from Sora's wrath *, before the light shall arise. Rest thou here, Rosgala.

* The situation of Cathula was the more alarming, as he had formerly incurred the displeasure of the king of Sora, by assisting Sgaro against him.

gala. The storm is lower. The stars look over the edge of their broken clouds, and the moon lifts her pale head through the distant tree. They will soon shew thee the path of my return. Rest here, my love, Rosgala!—Ye lights of heaven, shine on my love; ye spirits on their beams, dwell with her on her rock. When you hear her say, ‘Cathula, what delays thy return?’ tell her you behold the steps of my coming.

“COME, thou mayest,” said Rosgala; “but ah! I fear the billow’s roar. Some blast may raise it high; or some angry ghost may, again, embroil it in his course. But thou shalt come, my love: and yet I fear.—The sea may grow; the shades may depart; or Sora awake ere thou dost come. But no; my love shall return soon. Spirits of my fathers! guard Cathula.”

HE went; he reached the shore: but no boat is nigh. He runs in search of it far. The thought of his soul is on the oozy rock with Rosgala.

WHAT shall that helpless mourner do?—Her eye is towards the darkly shore; but no Cathula comes. The waves grow upon her rock. They gather about her feet. But, Conloch, thou art not wet; thou art lifted high in her arms.

“WHAT detains thee, my love? Have the waves stopped thy course to the shore; or have the boats of Sora been distant far?—O that thou wert ashore, my child! ’Tis for thee that trembles thus the soul of Rosgala.”

SHE ties him on Cathula’s shield. A withered tree comes, wandering on the wave, to her rock. On its top she fixes Conloch.

SHALL I awake thee, Conloch? No, thy cries would pierce my soul, like darts. Safe thou mayest reach the shore; and Sora’s

ra's king may have pity. Or, thy father perhaps may find thee. But ah! my child, thy father I fear is not. On that cloud his spirit waits for mine.—Stay, Cathula; thy love is coming.

A HIGHER surge comes, white-tumbling, over the rock. In its cold bosom it folds Rosgala. “Farewel, O my Conloch!”

Too late, Cathula comes in the boat of Sora. He looks for the rock: but no rock, dark-rising above the wave, is seen.—“The growing sea hath covered its oozy top! No Rosgala; no Conloch is here! O that the same wave had inclosed Cathula! Then, Rosgala, would we smile in death; Conloch we would clasp in our arms; his tender frame should not be hurt by rocks.—Shall Cathula die or live?”

THE light, half-mixt with darkness, breaks on Sora's hills. A small isle is near. A watery cave is under its rock; and over its mouth there bends, in its own gray coat of moss, an aged oak. Five generations saw the ocean shrink and grow since this oak had given the king of Sora shelter. In the cave below it he once hid his spouse, as he moved to war. ‘To-morrow,’ he said, ‘I return, and bring the head of Lanfadda.’ He went; the spear of Lanfadda travelled through his side, and forbade to fulfil his promise. Two days, with their nights, returned. But no word of thy return, red-haired Ulan-orchul. Oi-dana is sad in her cave. Her dark hair wanders on winds; and her white hands beat, like foamy waves, her breast.—Mournful through night is her voice of grief. The mariner hears it as he passes by. He turns to see if it may be the music of a spirit of the deep. And thus was discovered the

H h

fe-

secret cave.—It is here Cathula waits for night. It comes with all its stars. Rosgala descends on the soul of her love. She comes, soft-gliding on the face of the deep. Her robe is of the white mist that rises on Cona, when morning-dews are melting in the beams of the sun. But her tresses still are wet: they drop like the dew of roses on the bank of their flow-rolling river.—She tells him of her fate; she tells him how she laid Conloch on his shield. ‘But let Cathula,’ she says, ‘awake, and fly safe to Inistore.’”

He rose. In silent grief over the waves he came. But since, he is often sad. His tears in the morning flow for Rosgala; and his sighs in the evening are heard for Conloch †.

GREAT, said the king of Morven, is the cause of Cathula's grief. But Conloch perhaps may live. Thy shield may have carried him to the shore, and the people of Sora might have pity. “He may one day,” they would say, “lift this shield to defend us.” Yes, they may have spared him; and the warriors may one day say of him, “His arm is like the arm of Cathula: his spear is like one of the spears of Morven.” Why then should darkness dwell on the soul of the mighty? Cathula is not alone when the clang of the shield arises.

Thus passed the night in Carric-thura's halls. Gray morning at length arose in the east. His eyes are half open like the weary hunter on the heath when he is scarce awake. Dark waves begin to roll in light. Hill's left half their head in day. Stars hide in caves their dim heads; for they see the son of the morning lift his yellow head behind his hill, and looking, with his broad eye, farther than

† Here Cathula's bard ends his narration.

than ever travelled the restless kings of the world †. They see him, and retire from his presence; as the daughters of strangers when they see Malvina.

NOR did the beams of the sun, that day, bring gladness to the scout of Inistore. From the height of his rock he looks on the sea. Dark ships are on the shore. Like bees issuing from the trunk of their oak, when the sun is on the vale of flowers, they pour on the beach their men. The steps of his return are quick. "Cathula! Lochlin is on thy shore."

AND let them come, said Cathula; for my friends are nigh. But why didst thou not see them sooner? Why, O sun, didst thou not sooner rise?—But perhaps thou hast been hearing the tale of wo, like Cathula; or mourning for thy spouse and son.—Yes, great light, for thou movest in thy blue field alone: no beam, like thyself, attends thee in the glory of thy course. Thy spouse has been torn from thy side in heaven, by the storm: thy son has been torn from thee, as, some night, thou hast been travelling through the troubled deep*. Yes, fair light, thou hast met in thy course such a night as seized Cathula; and thou art now the husband of no spouse; the father of no Conloch.—Yet thy grief is only for a season. Thou movest forth in the steps of thy majesty, and thy dark foes vanish. The spirits that spread death over the plains in thy absence, hide themselves in the caves of the mountains when thou dost come.—So shall the fame of Cathula, in the interval of

H h 2

his

† When the ancient Galic poets use to assimilate every other object to its own this expression, they are supposed to mean situation. This figure, when properly used, has a fine effect, as we are pleased by it the Roman emperors.

* The mind, when under the influence to see life and sentiment ascribed to inanimate objects.

his grief, arise. No cloud of sorrow shall hide the battle from his fight. His soul shall grow like a mountain-stream when its course is straitened; it shall swell in danger like a flood, when dark rocks oppose it.

THE shield of Inistore was struck. Connal took his spear; and the hand of Fingal is on the blade of Luno.—The standard of Rinama streams, like a rainbow, in air: the son of Ruro and myself stand like two pillars of summer's fultry cloud: they are fair without; but they hide the lightning in their fold, and the roar of the thunder is around.

As a storm of hail comes rushing over ocean*, and drives the furge before it, till it breaks its force against the scaly side of a whale or oozy isle; or as the spirit in the storm lifts the white billows in his wrath, and heaves them, with all their foam, hoarse-roaring over a rock; so rushed our hosts, in all their terrors, to meet the war.—We saw the crowded ranks of Lochlin gathered around Manos, like flights of sea-fowl round their own rock. Its dark sides are covered with their thronging wings; but its head rises, with all its shaggy brows, above them, and shrinks not at the roar of the coming storm.

It was then Fingal spoke to Connal, and to the chief of Inistore. All the youths blessed the king of Morvan, as they listened to his words.

“ OUR names, chiefs of the battles of the spear, are already in the

* In the original, this passage is no less terrible than the scene which it describes.

Mar stoirm ghaillbheach mheallain
Na steud-ruith thairis air cuantaibh,
A' sguaba' nan toma stoadhach,
'S gam buala' ri † uchd nan an-bheann;
† *al. biafa gabhuidh.*

—No mar spiorad na doinninn a' fèide'
Nam beanntal' eiti' faile
Le'n cobhar ceann-ghlas, a' fàirich
Measg charraige cruaidh a' gearrach;
—B' amhull sin farum ar fèachd
Dol an cinnfeal gleachd do'n arach.

the song, while others want their fame. Let the sons of youth have the honour of the battle of Inistore. We stand on the hill, rocks ready to rush into the vale, if they need our aid."

THE hand of Ogan is on his sword: the son of Ruro half-exalts his spear; and the eye of Ossian is on Fingal.

I SEE, said the king, three chiefs before the three columns of Lochlin's spears. One shines a beam of light, perhaps, in the first of his battles. Nor is he of the weak in arms. Thine, Ossian, be the lot to contend with the chief; but quench not at once his fame. The tear, perhaps, is in the eye of his spouse; and his father may now be dim with years. No son beside, perhaps, has the aged chief: Ossian, spare the beam.—Thine, Ogan †, be that other dark leader of the war. "And mine," said the son of Ruro, "shall be Manos, king of spears."

THE kings remained upon their hills. Like three whales, with all their billows of foam, we rolled to battle. But the host of Manos withstood our assault, firm as the rock in the sea of Inistore. Whales strike against its sides, and waves climb up its face. But it remains fixed; all their force cannot move it.

NOR stood the sons of Lochlin harmless in their place, when the fury of the battle rose, and the strife was kindled by the songs of the bards*. Ogan is bound with a thousand thongs, and the son of Ruro shrinks back from the spear of Manos.—The young lister
of

† Ogan: the name of Kinama's son.

* It was part of the office of the bards to animate the combatants by their songs during the action. The old Persian Magi are said to have done the same; and Ho-

mer alludes to the like custom in the time of the Trojan war:

— thro' the Grecian throng

With horror sounds the loud *Oribian* song:

The navy shakes; and at the dire alarms

Each bosom boils, each warrior starts to arms.

Il. xi. 13.

of the spear pressed upon Ossian. I defended myself from his strokes, but fought not his early fall.

“Dost thou despise my youth, son of strength,” he said, as the big tear swelled in either eye; “dost thou despise my youth, when thou hast not lift thy beamy spear? Shall I, all day, beat thy shield, as does the harmless boy a rock? Shall I reap no share of fame, while my friends hew down the ranks of war?—But I will elsewhere seek renown.”

His people followed him as he went, and my steps pursued him slowly behind. I saw the chiefs come down from their hills, like three mountain-streams when they leap, white, from rocks, and meet with all their earth, and stones, and trees, in some green vale below.—Manos meets the king of Morven, and the clang of their steel is terrible.—But who could stand before Fingal? The spear is wrested from the hand of Manos, and the thick thongs confine him. Connal stands in the place of Ogan; nor was his strength in battle small.

CATHULA met the beam of youth that fought with Ossian, as o’er the field he wandered in search of fame. His heart warmed to the stranger, as he saw him brightening before him in all the stately beauty of youth. What pity, said his soul to him, this light so soon should fail! “Why, warrior of youth, shouldst thou so early fall, like a young tree in the vale? the summer breeze creeps thro’ its blossoms, and spreads its fragrance on the fields around. Retire, son of youth, lest the maid of thy love should mourn. Retire, for her sake; that thou mayest fight thy future battles.”—“But I will be famed in my first,” said the youth, as on he rushed.—“Thou mayest;

mayest, in falling by the mighty," replied the chief, as he lifted on high his spear.

LIKE the force of two warring streams †, or two waves driven on by contrary winds, they fought. Like the breaking of those waves on the rock between was the sound of the shields of heroes. Their broken spears fly, glancing, through air; but their swords, like meteors wielded by two contending ghosts, are in their hands. The shield of the youth is pierced in the midst. The sword of Cathula passes through its folds. Nor stops it then. Its return is stained with blood; and the red stream follows it through the cleft in the shield.

As falls a green lofty pine by the mountain blast *, when the ax hath half cut it through, making the echoing rock start, and the earth tremble around; só falls the youth on his founding arms. His foot is bathed in a little rill, and his blood is mixed with its gurgling stream.

" I

† The Galic language abounds in epithets, which give it often a peculiar energy that cannot always be transfused into a translation. Of this we have here a striking instance.

'N sin chuaidh iad an dail a cheile,
Mar dha bhuinne ri treun-cho'rag:
'S gach gaith a' neartach an faothreach—
Builleán bho'bhí, beucach, do'bhídh.
Gu cuidreach, euidreamach, beumnach,
Bha na Trein mar thuinn tigh'e da thaobh,
Gan ruaga' le ftoirm, toirt nuahan
Air carraig chruaidh meadhon-barach.

* The ancient Galic poets were peculiarly happy in their choice of similes. They always drew them from objects so striking and familiar, as to make a powerful impression on the fancy; while a cer-

tain combination of harmonic and corresponding sounds, peculiar to the Celtic poetry, took the firmest hold of the memory and ear. This liveliness of images, and arrangement of sounds, greatly contributed to the preservation of their poetry by oral tradition. It was probably with a view to facilitate this, that they used such a profusion of tropes, as may rather dazzle than please in a translation, while in the original they always charm. The comparison before us is both grand and beautiful.

Thuit e mar chrann-giuthais ard-ghom
Le gaoith-shaíach, thun a ghearraidh;
Le geilt thug a charraig fuaimneach,
Chrithich agus ghluais an talamh.

"I fall †," he said as the strife ceased along the plain, "I fall in the first of my battles; and my fame shall not be heard. But I fall by the mighty, and my name may remain, with his, in the song. 'It was the sword of Carric-thura's king,' the bard may say, 'that pierced the side of Anal! I will hear thee, O bard, on my flying wind, and with joy I will ride on my cloud. Cathula, raise in this green spot my tomb. Place that gray stone at my head: but the son of future times will not know it. He will make it the bridge over some little stream which he cannot bound across. Some gray bard will miss it from its place, and say, 'Where is the stone of him that fell by Cathula?' And thus my name may be heard.—O that thou hadst this sword, Annir of Sora! thou wouldest shed over it a tear; though without fame thy youth is fallen.—Cathula, hang that shield in thy hall. Though it did not defend me, I love it. Once it bore me on the stormy billows."

His last words were darts of death to the soul of Cathula. He stood in his place, like the tree which is blasted by the lightning, for he knew the shield of his fathers. He falls on the face of his son.

Our heroes gather around them. We stand, silent in our grief, like the pines of Gormla, when they behold the fall of their companions by

an

† In the original, this speech of Conloch is very affecting, and has a melancholy tender cast which cannot be so easily conveyed into another language.

Thuit mi' ann tus na t eug-bboil;

'S chon eirich mo chliu san dan.

Ach thuit mi le lamh nam buadh,

'S baidh luadh air mo ghaifge le chliu'san.

—"Si hana Ri' Inuse-torc

A lot 's an araich an t Aineal."

Beannachd do t anam, a bhaire,

"Cluinnam fein ga h ard do ghuth,

"S biom ait a marcachd na fine,

'S glas-cheo na fri' gam eide'.

—An leac ud 'san lonan uaine

Togaibh asuas aig mo cheann;

Gus an leagar thar fruthan faoin i,

'S an dean an t Aos-dan a h iontrain.

Ainnir Shora mo ghraidh!

Ged' thuit 'san araich so t annsachd,

Shille' do dheoir gu bras

Nam faighe' tu Ghaeil mo-chloide.

A shuil cholgach nan dearg-chath

Crochs' ad thalla mo chaomh-gia;

Sgia' mo ghraidh (ged'rinn i mo leon)

Air 'n do sheol mi ro steuda faile!

an angry spirit of night, that had laid their green heads low. We hear, at times, the broken words of Cathula, and echo to his grief with our sighs.

‘AND art thou fallen, son of my love*! art thou fallen, Conloch, by thy father! Was it for this I unsheathed the sword? O that in thy place, my Conloch, I had been low! Let The man of wo be the name of Cathula!’

FINGAL saw the grief of his friend, and long descended his tears in silence. At length he bade the tomb of Conloch rise, and the bards pour the mournful song. He bade the thongs be loosed from the hands of Manos; as thus he spoke to the king of spears.

“Why, chief of Lochlin, dost thou delight in war? why dost thou deprive the warrior of his future fame; and bid his days, like that early-fallen flower, to cease in the midst? Why dost thou darken the days of the aged, and add sorrow to the burden of years, with which their gray head is already bended. Why dost thou cause the eye of the virgin to weep, and take pleasure in the tear of the orphan?---Are their sighs to thy ear as the music of harps, when thou dost bid them so often rise? Are their tears a stream to thy soul, when thirsty? Or canst thou smile, when they weep, because the pursuer of their deer on the mountain is fallen †?---Are

I i

not

* The original has here several lines which consist almost entirely of interjections. As this sort of natural language does not always admit of a translation, it will suffice to give the words in their Gaelic garb.

Och! is ochain! a mhic dhileis!

Ou dilian cha daisg thu tuille!

Och! agus Och! nan Och eithre!

*S truagh gur mairionn mis' ad'dhiaigh!

† This image is beautifully pursued in

the following extract of a St Kilda lament. True poetry is confined to no time or place. It is the offspring of nature, and extends as wide as her dominions. It is the genuine language of every feeling of the human heart when strongly agitated by any emotion or passion.

“Be hush'd, my tender babes! Your father will soon come with the spoil of the rock.—What detains thee, my love; why

not the thousand ills which grow on every heath, and which the son of the hunter is heir to, a sufficient toil to go through?---Why shouldst thou scatter more evils in his way, and strew his path with swords? Canst thou not walk the few steps to the tomb without treading in blood; may not the deer of thine own woods suffice thee?---Like that shadow, must thou fly unsettled over every field, though the squally wind, that shall scatter its dark mist, is so nigh it?---Behold the blood of Conloch: behold the grief of Cathula: and behold the sword of Luno.---But my sword, Manos, seeks not thy blood. Go; return to thy spouse, and pursue thy deer; but let thy ship bound no more towards Morven, or the stormy sea of Inistore."

"If it shall; then may this broad shield, by which my father swore, no longer defend the breast of Manos!---O that I had not done so much; for dear to my soul was he that is low!"

He failed in his dark ships on the wave. Mournful, we go with Carric-thura's chief. The steps of his silence were slow: and often, in the midst of his troubled sigh, he stood, and looked back on the tomb of his son.

MANOS:

why so long this day is thy absence? Hast thou forgot thy spouse and children of youth; thy sister of love, and mother of age? No: but perhaps the fowls have been shy, or scared away; or, ah me! perhaps the string has been weak, or the rock been slippery.---What detains thee, my love? I will look for thy return from this peak of the rock.

"I see none move through the gray cliffs.---But ah! who is that, dash'd at their foot by the waves? O! 'tis he; 'tis my love! he fell from their terrible height!

O my love! dost thou not hear; dost thou not pity the tears of thy spouse and orphans? Thy sister, too, calls; and thy mother, in all her feeble years, is sad. But thou hearest not; neither shalt thou any more arise!---My love, thou hast left us helpless indeed!---Our fishes from henceforth shall sport, safe, in their sea; our fowls shall roam, free, through their air: our eggs shall remain in the cleft of their rock.---He that could bring them home is gone! My love, thou hast left us forlorn indeed!"

M A N O S * :

A P O E M.

THE A R G U M E N T.

FINGAL, returning from his expedition to Inistore, mentioned in the preceding poem, finds an old man in great distress in Icola, a small desert isle. His story is told. Fingal and his men bring him with them, and promise to redress his wrongs. On their arrival on the coast of Morven, they find Manos, notwithstanding his promise, had taken advantage of their absence, and landed there before them. They offer him peace, which he rejects. After a ludicrous duel between two of their men, Fingal and Manos engage in single combat, in which the latter is worsted, and mortally wounded.---After the fight, Umad, the old man who had been found in the cave, meets unexpectedly with his daughter, and obtains relief from Fingal.---The poet begins this piece with an address to his harp.

DESCEND from thy place, mournful harp of Cona; descend,
thou dweller between the dark-crufted shields of my father.
The winds are abroad : ghosts ride on their blustering wings ; per-

I i 2

haps

* This poem is called in the original *Cath Mhamuis*, " the battle of Manos ;" and sometimes, from the scepce of it, *La eas Lao'ire*, " the day of the water of Lora." Several circumstances in it are so calculated to lay hold of the memory, and strike the minds of *The many*, that it is still one of those that are most generally repeated by the lovers of ancient poetry ; though the correct editions of it are not the most common.

That part of it which relates to Umad and his dog, is often repeated by itself, and well known by the title of "*Laoidh 'n Amadain mhoir's a ghaothair bhain ;*" or "*Laoidh 'n Umaidh gan geill na sloigh.*" *Amadan* and *Umaidh* are synonymous names : they signify " a fond," or " foolish man." It begins with these lines ;

Tuirling a chlarfach a bhroin,
Tha cho'nuidh men'g giathan mo shinnsear ;
Tuirling

haps when they hear thy voice, they will bid their airy courfers stop, that they may listen to their praise.---Yes ; for the night is already calm : the blue face of the sea is smooth ; no breeze moves the withered leaf. The thistle's beard hangs in mid-air : the moon rests on the hill, its beams are on the low mists of the vale. In its gray skirts are the habitation of ghosts ; they hover in silence over the bard, for still they retain their love to his song.

AND the song of Ossian shall not be with-held, spirits of my love : neither shall the harp of Cona, when you are nigh, be silent. It is not sweet as the harps of clouds, for its voice of age is mournful. But you love it, because it awakes the memory of the past, and brings back the days of your joy. You bend from your clouds to hear it, as listens some bard in the sunny vale to the weak lay of the grasshopper. I listen, he says, for I heard it when I was young, and loved it. Thus you still love the song of Ossian.— But are there no bards that attend yourselves on your dark-winged course ; who pour their nightly song in your dusky hall ? Where is Ullin, the gray bard of other times, with his sweetly-trembling harp ? Where art thou, Alpin, with thy pleasant voice ? And, tuneful Carril, where art thou ? Have you forgot all the songs of Selma ; are you silent in praise of the heroes of Morven ? No ; sons of the song, you still tune your airy harps to their fame. The sound mixes with the sigh of the mountain : the hind, listening beneath the tree of her stream, hears it, when moon-beams glitter in the vale, and all is calm around. Sometimes also, I hear your soft voices in the breeze of night, when scarce moves the edge of the light with-

ed

Tuirling 'sgu clainnte' le taibhsa.
Air itte' na gaoith do cheolan,

'S iad a' coisge son-steuda dan spior
A dh'ciseachd ri fuaim do thormain.

ed leaf of the oak. The thousand ghosts, with their dim joy, gather around you, to hear the voice of their praise *. They bend forward, leaning on their deathless spears. Their shields, like the broad mist of the darkened moon, hang on the half-viewless belt; and the meteor-sword is in the dark, shadowy sheath beside it.

BUT how feeble are you become, my friends, who once have been so mighty! A rougher blast, on the wing of its whirlwind, comes: the harp and the bard are driven before it; and the heroes are rolled, a mixed cloud, together.—The sound of their music still spreads along the silence of Morven; themselves are rustling in the distant blast, and mixing their voices with the stream of Lora.

IT was not so I beheld you once, heroes of woody Morven! It was not so I beheld you, when you followed the king, like the strength of his thousand streams to battle, when the strife of Manos rose. It rose on Lora, like the sudden storm of Lumon, which overtakes the mariner when he lays down his head, and says to his mates, We shall now have calm.

WE

* The fancy of this passage ought, perhaps, to procure it a place in the poet's own words:

Ullin aos-lia nan teuda binn.
Ailpein ghrinn, 's a Chaorrlil cheolair,
'N do chaill sibhs' orain ne Feine,
'S ar speis do chleachda nam Mor-bheann?
Ni bamluidh; a chlanna nan dan,
'S tric fonn ar clarfach 'fa cheo,
'Se taosga' le offun an aonaich
(Feadh ghleanntai 'faoin nam fafach,)
Gu cluas na h eilid 'fi 'g eisdeachd,
Fu' shraoth-ghceugan 'f an oidhche shaimhe.
'S ni'n tearc gum chluafa fein
'Fuaime ca'trom ar ciuil bhinn,

Tra 'f gann air guala na daraig
A gluaiseas an duilleach tha feargte.
—Chi mi doilleir mile tannas
Ag ia'adh, nam pannal, man cuairt duibh,
A chlaifdin am molaidh fein
'S an taic ca'trom ri sleaghan gun bhuair.
Tha'n sgia, mar chruth dorchas na Gealaich,
Air ctios-leath fholuicht nan nialuibh,
'S an cloidhe dealain na thruaill fein,
Ri slios doilleir nan treun-churaidh'.
Ach c'ait a bheil ar treise anois,
Tra dh'fhogras an offag na cuairt sibh?
'N a luib dh'fhalbh 'm filidh 'fa cheol,
'S na fir mhora nan neula duaichni'.
Tha 'm fonn a' sgaoile fca' ghleanntai' tofdach;
'S iad fein ann osnaiche Laoire.

We failed from Carric-thura's bay. Night tumbled in her restless bed from wave to wave; and the thick-woven clouds, with their many folds, concealed the stars. Night, thou art dark indeed.—Lift, Morven, said the bards, thy head through clouds. Selma, pour thy beam. Tonthena †, shake thy red hair above mists; Uloicha, let the travellers of Ocean see thy beam. And thou, broad moon, lift on the wave thy face, and spread in clouds thy white sails.

—But what faint light is that, which shoots its feeble ray thro' the gloom? It is like the eye of a ghost, when it darts a dim flame from his face, when the dusky winds lift, at times, his misty hair. It is some friendly spirit that guides us on the nightly wave; in its path let us steer our course.

We reached the flame, dim-shining in its place; but no ghost was there. It was the light of the cave of Icola *. The beam had been dying away, after its flame had measured half the night. The burst of grief, as we approached it, met our ear. It sighed frequent in the gale of reeds. It came, pouring, from the hollow womb of a rock, and whistled mournful in its mossy beard. We stood and listened to its sound. It melted our souls of war.

“Thou art fallen, friend of my age! and I remain alone in the cave of my rock. I groan beneath the load of sorrow, and of years.

† *Ton-thena*, “fiery tail;” *Iul-oiche*, “guide of night;” the names of certain stars.

* One of the Hebrides still goes by this name, but it is uncertain whether it be the same; as almost all these isles have lost their ancient names, and retain only those that have been given them by their

foreign invaders, when subject to the crown of Norway. Hence the names of these *Innse-Gall*, or, “isles of the strangers,” cannot be traced to any Galic etymon; while those of every country, promontory, &c. on the continent, have generally a significant meaning, and an obvious etymology.

years. O thou last of my friends, why hast thou so early left me! O that I had died before thee! Then wouldest thou have shed on my corse the tear; and spread on my cold clay the dust. But thou couldst not survive me long. Thou wouldest waste in thy grief, like the flower of Etha, when its root is consumed by the secret worm. I remember thy sorrow when my foot had failed. Untasted beside thee lay thy food. Had I died; for very grief, thou wouldest go with me to the tomb. For thee can I do less?—But should I wish to live, can I, on one foot, pursue Icola's deer, or have I another friend to bring them to my cave in their chace? O that the last had never come there! It was with it thou didst fall over the rock in death.

“ But thou wouldest not leave me, O Gorban †, alone: I think

† *Gao'r-ban*, “ a white hound.” The lamentation of Umad for his hound will not appear unnatural or extravagant if we consider the situation of the mourner. Lame, old, in a desert isle, and destitute of all other means of procuring subsistence; his hound to him was every thing. The attachment and sagacity of the animal himself seem also to have been remarkable. Two days and nights he had lain on the tomb of his master's murdered son, as if he had meant to expire on the grave where his dust had been repositied, if the necessity of the old man had not called him away to a voluntary exile. His usefulness and sagacity there, we have already seen.

If we form our opinion of what these animals were at that time, from what we now find them, we may perhaps be not a little mistaken. Their usefulness to so-

ciety at that period, raised them to a rank which now they have no title to hold. Their education and occupation were the same with those of man; and they constantly enjoyed both his company and his friendship, which must have greatly improved their nature, so susceptible of imitation and of gratitude. Strangers to the kennel, man late and early was their only companion; and man, the fairest copy they knew, they strove to resemble. By man they found themselves raised above their proper place in the scale of being, for which they shewed their gratitude by exerting themselves to serve and to please him. This mutual friendship became at length so perfect, that almost all nations in the hunting state, or first stage of society, allowed, that even in their paradise, or that “ humbler heaven” which they expected beyond this life,

“ Their faithful dog should bear them company.”

“ It

think I hear thy spirit's tread. Till Umad be there, thou carest not for the deer of clouds. Soon shall the stag thou hast left me fail; and then shall I ascend to meet thee in midst. Be thy steps nigh my cave till then; at its shadowy side shall thy grave be dug. O that some wanderer over the wave would make beside it my narrow bed!"

WHY, said Fingal, dost thou weary for the narrow bed, dweller of the cave? Is not the night of the tomb long enough, although thou shouldst not bid its darkness hasten. Thou art not destitute; tho' time shakes in all thy limbs, and thy friends, like the years that are past, have failed. They are not the foes of the feeble, dweller of the rock, who are now around thee.

"I KNOW, children of night, you are not foes to the feeble, but you are of the feeble yourselves. You cannot pursue the deer for Umad; neither can you dig, when he is no more, his grave. But you are not of the sons of the wind; I see your arms of steel. Come, stranger, into my cave; come, from the wanderings of night. Often have I spread the feast, and rejoiced in the presence of the sons of other lands. But now, no stranger do I see, though my cave is still open, and my nightly beam is kindled to guide them. Come, from the wanderings of night, and partake of my feast. It is the last gift of my low-laid friend; for there you behold the fair Gorban dead. No more wilt thou rise, my Gorban!"

WE entered and saw the white hound for which the aged
mourn-

It cannot be thought that too much stress is laid on the circumstances to which this attachment has been ascribed, if we consider, that even the ox of the Hottentot has acquired almost as much sagacity as

has *now* the dog of the European. And this is imputed, by *Buffon*, to his having the same bed and board and lodging with his master.

* It

mourned. Over it he leaned on a pointless spear; on the end of it rested his tearful cheek. The wind of the cave spread over his breast his white beard, and tossed his few gray hairs about his neck.—“But thou wilt not rise,” he said with a sigh; “thou wilt spring no more with joy on the heath, nor bring the wearied son of the mountain to my cave. No; but Gorban, on our clouds we shall meet *.”

We partook of Ulmad's feast, and listened to his tale.

“He whom you here behold, in all the trembling of age, was once no dweller of a lonely cave: he was the chief of Stramora's echoing vale. Stramora, vale of my love! blue at the foot of thy gray rocks were thy streams; and green, on thy lofty hills, thy woods. Many were the heroes who feasted in my hall in peace, and stood behind the streaming of my banners in the day of war. My deer wandered over many mountains, and drank of distant streams. The morning sun rose on my dwelling with joy; and the evening shades were, to my halls, no harbingers of darkness. Two glad lights shone, in their brightness, there: the growing strength of Morad, and the mild beauty of Lamina. But they were beams that shone in the glad vale, only for a little. The storm came, and they hid themselves in secret.—Calmar beheld the beauty of my

K k

daugh-

* It has been already observed, that the story of Umad and his dog is among the most common of the fragments of Ossian. As the ancient Caledonians lived by hunting, it was natural for them to have a particular attachment to their hounds, and likewise to put a high value upon poems that celebrated this attachment. Hence a peculiar regard has always been paid to this piece, as we learn from an old proverbial distich (seldom forgot when the poem is repeated), in which we find it classed with Dargo, as deserving a very particular attention. See first note on Dargo.

Gach dan gu dan an Deirg,
 'S gach leidh gu leidh 'a Amadain mhoir.

daughter, and fought her love; but she followed Morloch to the streams of Glendivar. The rage of Calmar grew. He came with war from Borba. Age was on the arm of Umad, and my son was young. The spear which he could lift was still but light; and thin was his youthful shield. He heard of the fame of that friend of strangers, the king of hilly Morven. He went by night to seek his aid. But Calmar heard the tread of his feet.—My son untimely dies!—The cry of death reached my ears. I took the shield of my strength in my hand: but I found it heavy. I put on the mail: but my knees trembled under its weight. I tried in vain to unsheathe the sword. Calmar sent me to this desert isle. Gorban heard my steps, where, for two days, he had sat on the tomb of my son. His tears were a stream on his grave; but his dreams of night were not of dark-brown deer. The thoughts of his sleep are of Morad: for him are his frequent sighs; for he will no more lead him to the chase, nor bound with him through the desert.—He heard my tread, and followed me. But his steps were heavy, like mine, when penfive I bore to his narrow bed the sleeping Morad.—Three years have since, with all their lingering days, failed by me on the deep. My foot too, by a fall in the chase, hath failed. But the burden of life, though heavy as the arms of his strength to the warrior of age, I still could bear, if thou, my Gorban, hadst remained with me. But now that thou art gone, I soon expect to follow.”

WE felt for the aged chief. The king promised to restore him to Stramora. He looked to Gorban; and we heard his sigh. “O that thy tomb were near the dwelling of Umad!”—We promised it should; and glad was the face of the aged.

THE

THE winds whistled through the withered grafs, and shook the waving tree. A louder blast descended from the mountain. Its tread was like distant thunder on the hollow stream. Half-viewless sat on its breast a ghost. He waved, as he passed, a meteor like a sword. The moon half-looked upon it over the edge of the heath, and shewed its dark-red stain. His words came to some of our ears, as rolling by in his blast he said, "Warriors of Morven, haste!"

WE opened our sails to the wind. We flew over the deep. Our speed was like the whale of Inistore, when she is pursued home by the storm of Lochlin. In silence we reached our coast. Manos was already there. He knew the king was absent; and he gave his oaths to the wind.

MORNING pours from the gates of the east. Morven lifts its head in gray day. The white mist ascends from Lora's stream. It climbs up half the hill, and exposes to our view the sleeping host. "I will ascend," said Connan, "and kill their king; why should he again deceive us with his words?"

SOUL of the small renown, said the king, dost thou think, because Manos is false, Fingal will be base? Did ever warrior of mine fly, like the shaft of night, without striking first his shield? —Young Fergus, where art thou? Go to that host: tell them, Fingal never draws his sword till his peace is first refused*.

FERGUS went; mild as the morning sun on the mountain, when its beams are bathed in dew, and a thousand trees, with all their

K k 2

flowers,

* This line (in the original, "*Cha d'ing, That the strong should always be thug Fionn riabh blar gun cbumha*") has merciful;—or, That quarrels, if possible, passed into a common proverb, import- should be avoided.

flowers, are seen below in their smiling lake †.—But the breeze soon comes, and spreads a momentary ruffle over the face of the smoothed wave. The yellow hills, and the trees in the deep, are vanished; and all their beauty, for a season, is failed. Thus ruffled was the mild face of my brother of love, in his return from the hosts of Lochlin. Fingal knew he must fight. “Manos demands the combat of heroes.”

THE combat of heroes he shall have, said the boastful Connan; I will bring to my king the head of the chief.

Why should not Connan be allowed to know the weakness of his arm? He went: but Manos would not fight with the feeble. He bade the vaunting Fuathas come forth, to meet the boastful Connan.—In the battles of Lochlin Fuathas stood always behind; nor even there was he void of fear. One night as they had fought to the moon, too far behind, by the side of a little stream, was Fuathas. A tall hero appeared on the other side; and taller still appeared his spear. Fuathas flew: the other pursued him hard. In the midst of his fear, as he leapt the stream, he fell. Beneath him, to his joy, fell the foe. In vain dost thou plead for mercy, he cried, as he drew his sword. But none, save his own shade, had Fuathas.—Not smaller is now thy cause of fear, when thou descendest to engage with Connan.

WE saw him come forth from their host: but the rust was on
his.

† The beauty of this passage in the original claims here a place.

Dh' imich Fear'as mo bhrathair fein,
Mar orra'-fheibhre bha chruth,
Tra bhios dearfa na maidne 's an drineadh,
'Sa choill fa bli san lochan she'ar.
Ach thuirling oiteag on seach

'S mhill i caoin-ghnais na tragh;
Threig na coille, —threig na fheibhte
Bha 's an lochan fheimh ri gaire.
—B' amhuil sin caochla cruth
Mo bhrathar teachd dubhach nar co'ail,
O sheachd Lochlaist bha siar uainn.
“ Tha Manas ag iarraidh co'raig.”

his spear, It founded on his shield like the screaming of fowls, when they prepare to fight the battle of the wing on the watery ridge. Connan feared; but he remembered the eye of his king. He rushed on with his sword, and wounded the gray feather in the crest of Fuathas. At the stroke the man of Lochlin falls down with fear. He thought the wound he had received was in the head. Connan turns to see if his king beheld. The sword of Fuathas comes behind, and hews his two ears from his head of pride. The valley echoes to his cry as back he runs to our host. At the foot of the king he falls. "I bravely die," he said; "Fingal, revenge thy hero's death *."

THE host of Manos came on with all their steel. Many were their shields and spears; many their rattling mails and swords of light; many their axes of war † to hew down the battle.—The joy of our people arose, as slowly we moved to meet them ‡.

—BUT

* The heroism of Connan, unlike all the rest of Fingal's warriors, lay chiefly in his tongue. For this reason he is upon all occasions ridiculed and exposed. Perhaps some mischiefs too, of which he had been the author, particularly the death of Dermid, had helped much to draw upon him this odium. In one of Ossian's poems he is called, *Mac mor na bha riabh ri ole*; "The heir of all who ever did evil." He is often called *Griomach nam Fiann*; "The blemish of Fingal's heroes." And from the above adventure he derived his common title of *Connan maol*; or, "Connan without the ears."—It is a strong proof not only of the valour but of the virtue of these heroes, that a single instance who failed in these

qualities was looked upon as a rare phenomenon, and branded with such marks of infamy and disgrace.—The name of Connan is become a proverbial appellation in the Galic, for a *peevish ill-natured person*.

† We find no mention of this weapon among the arms of Fingal. It was, probably, peculiar to the Scandinavians, and the same with the Lochaber-ax afterwards adopted by the Caledonians.

'B iomad cloidhe 's b' iomad sgiath,
B' iomad triath le luirich aigh
B' iomadach ann clogaide cruaidh
B' iomadach ann tuagh chum sgiath.

‡ A general engagement is sometimes related here, but so defective and incorrect as not to admit of a translation.

* * * * *

—BUT who comes in his speed from our hills, tall in the beauty of youth? His spear in his hand is like a tree: and his shield is like the moon of night. He is from the land of strangers; he asks if he may fight the battle of the king. Fingal beheld the warrior with joy, and blessed the strength of his youth. But Manos demanded the combat of kings: for he remembered the thongs of Inistore; and his pride arose like a whirlwind on dark waves, when mariners fear the danger.

WE stood in our place †. Fingal went forward in his strength. The sound of his arms was like the noise of the spirit of Loda, when he spreads his blast over the land, and marks his path with death and terror. He struck with his spear the broad shield. His mail rung with the founding of his steps: its noise was like the roar of a thousand waves, lifted by the rage of a storm against the dark side of a rock. The gathering of the tempest on the hero's brows is terrible. The son of Luno gleams high in his hand. His hair is tossed on the blast of winds, like the foam of a stream

white-

† This passage is much admired in the original, and is therefore inserted for the sake of such as may understand it. It has indeed a native grandeur in its own dress, which will not fit so unaffected and easy on the idiom of another language.

Chuaidh Fionn asios le tartar namhann,
'S fuaimneach arm mar spiorad Lodda,
A' sgoile gioraig is crith-chatha
Feadh an rathaid gu grad cho'rag:
No mar mhillte tonn a' beucaich
Ann stoirm cìti ri sìos carraig;
Mar sin bha fuaim arm fa laireich.
S air a ghnais bha dulachd catha.
Bha chloidhe libhi' a dealradh,

Togt' ann aird an laimh a churaidh:
Sna gaoithe' strannar' a' gluasad
A chiabh, air shuadh freotha buinne.
—Na cnuic air gach saobh dheth chrithich,
'S chlisg an t slighe fùl' a chofan;
Las a shuillean:—dh'att a chroidhe;
B'ann fheiltidh a chith 's a chofas!

Chuaidh an sgiathan breac nam bloide';
Chuaidh an chloidhean gorm a bhearna;
Chuaidh an flegan fada libhidh
A chabba' 's a ghnìomh bu ghabhaidh:
Fhreagair na creagan don fhuaimneach
Thug gathana cruaidh gan strachda'
Thall fo bhos,—air corp nan treunlaoch;
Cho' fhreagair na speuran ard dhoibh.

* This

white-tumbling from the mountain rock. The little hills shrink before him, and the earth trembles under his steps. Lochlin see the awful terrors of his face: they see in it the flames of battle; and the beating of their hearts is high.

THE chiefs meet in battle: their two hosts look, with trembling wonder, on the dreadful fight.—But its terrors who can describe? Their varied shields are hewn, piecemeal, down. Their blue swords are broken; and their long tough spears fly, through the whistling air, in pieces. The echoing rocks answer to their strokes; and the skies resound with the noise.—Manos at length is bound.

HOLD, said Connan, Manos of spears, till I cut away his head of lies.

I AM, said Manos, in the hands of Fingal; his wrath burns not, like thine, a deadly flame.

YES; thou art in my hands: nor shall Fingal stain his fame, with the blood of a low-laid foe. Once more thou mayest go: But thy spouse must mourn, if thou dost again come back.

HE spoke; but the face of Manos is pale. The spear trembles under his weight as he moves. The thistle comes across his foot. Stumbling, on earth he falls. The broad wound is in his side.—His shield had opened its bosom to the spear of the king; for it had heard his former words*.

Hrs

* This refers to his swearing by his shield, in the end of the preceding poem, that he would not for the future trouble Fingal or any of his friends. The abhorrence of the poet, or rather of the people whose sentiments he spoke, to such falsehood, is strongly marked in his making the very shield of Manos resent it. Even Connan, low as his cha-

rafter appears, had such a sense of the enormity of the crime as to think it deserving of instant death;

Cumaibh riom Manos nan lann,

Sgu sgarainn a cheann f'a chorp.

As every stage of society has its own virtues and vices, it may be observed, that lying, perjury and deceit, are refinements that belong to civilized life, rather than

to

His tomb was raised. But what could the bards say†? Manos remembered not his words. When he was asked what he had done with his oaths? "Alas!" he said, "where I found, I left them."—Manos, thou wert generous; but wrathful and bloody was thy darkened soul.

We came to Selma's halls. The young hero who came to our wars was with us. But his countenance was sad, and often he looked to the hill.—"On its heath," he said, "I left the spouse of my love.

to that period which we call barbarous. The barbarian seldom acquires the art of disguising his sentiments, or the virtue of sneaking through the winding paths of insincerity and circumvention.

† Of all possible evils, that of being denied the funeral-song was thought, by the ancient Caledonians, the most dreadful. On the song of the bard depended not only their fame in this world, but their happiness in the next. This persuasion could not fail to have a happy influence upon their conduct, as it would be a continual spur to good and great actions. Even till some time after the extinction of their superintendants the Druids, the bards maintained their dignity, and discharged this part of their office without any respect of persons. In the case before us, we see the impartiality of Ossian in drawing even the character of an enemy. His generosity is celebrated, both in this and some other fragments; but unfortunately his delight in blood is always joined to it: He is still

—Manos, fuileach, corrach, fial,

And —Manos, Rì' fuileach nam cuach.

The Celtic bards did not, like the poets

of Greece and Rome, punish any man in the other world because he was unfortunate in this; as was the case with every one whom they forced to wander "A hundred years a melancholy shade!" (*Æn.* 6. 329.), for the want of burial. For their own faults only, the bards called people to an account: And then, as vice was never to be allowed quarter by them, they condemned the guilty to an adequate punishment, not only for a hundred years, but for ever; or at least till the *brath* or *dilinn*, when the world was to undergo a general revolution by fire or water. The morality which they inculcated was not the least valuable property of Ossian's poems. And it is remarkable, that his moral passages are in the original always short and striking; as if they had been intended to take hold of the memory, and to pass, as most of them have done, into common proverbs.—When any person fails in a solemn promise, nothing is more common than, by a distich of this poem, to remind him of the guilt and fate of Manos.

"Cait a bheil na mionnan mora Mhanais?"

Och! dh'fhagas far an d' fhuaras."

love. We fled from the strength of Calmar; for his heroes from the streams of Borba were many, and the friends of Morloch failed.

HIS words reached the ears of Umad, as, bended, he leaned on his staff, like a tree half overturned on Lena. The joy of the aged arose. He asked for Lamina. She came. She flew to her father. We saw the mingled joy of their souls. We wondered why we wept in the midst of our gladness. Our tears of joy were pleasant; like the sweet drops that fall from the oak of Morlia, when its green leaves rejoice in the day of the sun.

TO-DAY, said Fingal, we spread for the strangers the feast: to-morrow we give the children of distress our aid. The shield of Morven will stretch itself wide to cover the unhappy; and this sword is bright with joy when it is drawn to defend them. Then only the son of Luno † says, "I long to be bathed in blood."

THE night was spent in the feast and the song. Nor was thy

L I

voice

† The sword of Fingal had this name from its maker Luno, a smith of Lochlin, who had likewise fabricated arms for some more of the Fingalian heroes. In return, Ossian transmitted his name to posterity in a poem composed on the subject, and known by the title of (*an Gobha*) "The smith." Some fragments of this piece which still remain are very characteristic of the manners of the times. In the following lines the poet, with the ardour natural to a warrior, describes the transport of their joy on receiving these implements of war; "O how glad were we the next morning on receiving our arms from Luno!"—He

also tells the different names or epithets given to their respective swords: such as, "the son of Luno;" "the flame of the Druids;" "the raven, or bird of prey;" &c.

O b' aighearach sinn an dara mhaireach.
Ann an ceardaich Loin 'ic Liomhain!
Gum bu mhaith ar a ur chloidh'ne
S' ar deagh-fhleaghan fada righne.
B'e mac-an-Loin lann mhic Cu'il,
Nach d'fhag fuigheal riabh dh'sheoil daoine;
Gum bi'n Druil'annach lann Ofsair,
'Sgum bi Chofgarach lann Chaoilte.
Gum bi 'n Liomhanach lann Dhiarmid,
B'iomad fear fadhaich a mharbh i;
'S agam fein bha Gear-nan-calan,
Bu gharg, farum 'n am nan garbh chath.

* The

voice silent, my softly-trembling harp*. Thy sound was not then so mournful. Thou hadst, like me, thy companions about thee; and the king with his heroes heard thee. From their seats they leaned forward to listen; their faces were fide long-bending.—No silent mist on the vale were then our friends, my harp.—No mournful voice in the hollow tree of the mountain was, then, thy sound: no mofs-gray blasted tree, stript bare of all its leaves, was Offian.

* The bard had in the beginning of the poem addressed himself to the solitary companion of his wo, the harp; and here he again returns to it.

TRA-

T R A T H A L*:

A P O E M.

THE ARGUMENT.

OSSIAN, feeling the sun warm on the tomb of Trathal, addresses that luminary, and relates an adventure of the hero on whose tomb he sits.—Colgul, having been worsted by Trathal at the chace and tournament, contrived a stratagem to resent the supposed affront. He lands a number of his followers on the coast of Morven; and sends an old man to Trathal to counterfeit distress, and ask his immediate aid. Being thus ensnared, he defends himself with great bravery; and kills many of his opponents, with their leader, before he is missed by his people, who at length come to his aid.

SON of the morning, the steps of thy rising are lovely; the lifting of thy yellow hair above the eastern mountain. The hills smile when they behold thee; and the glittering vales, with all their

L 1 2

blue

* The hero of this poem was grandfather to Fingal, and generalissimo of the Caledonian army in their wars with the Romans. There is frequent mention made of him in the other poems of Ossian, and in tradition he is famous on account of his wars with the Druids. This piece, which could not be got altogether complete, goes by the title of

Sgeulachd air Tra'nì nam buadh

'S air Colgul nan tual bheart;

“The song of Trathal the brave, and of Colgul of the base deeds.”—The address to the sun, with which it opens, is ex-

tremely beautiful; but, towards the end, resembling somewhat that grand passage of the same kind in Carthén. It was natural for fightless Ossian, as well as for Milton, to make frequent addresses to this luminary. It is probable, however, they had at first no idea in common, tho' they may have been afterwards confounded by the carelessness of those who recited them. The opening of the poem, as correctly as it could be obtained, is subjoined in the Galic.

'S a Mhuc na h og-mhadain! ag eiridh

Air sleibhte soir, led' chiabhan or-bhuidh;

'S

blue streams, are glad. The trees lift their green growing heads through the shower to meet thee; and all the bards of the grove salute, with their morning-song, thy coming.—But whither does the night fly, on its dark eagle-wing, when it sees thy face; and where is the place of darkness? Whither do the stars retire from thy presence, and where is the cave in which they hide their trembling beauty? Into what desert dost thou chase them, when thou climbest the mountains of heaven, and pursuest them, like a mighty hunter, through the blue fields of the sky?—Son of heaven, the steps of thy course are lovely, when thou travellest above, in thy brightness, and scatterest from thy face the storms. The departure of thy yellow hair is lovely, when thou sinkest in the western wave; and lovely is the hope of thy coming. In the mists of night thou never lovest thy course; and tempests, in the troubled deep, in vain oppose thee. At the call of the morning thou art always ready, and the light of thy return

is

'S ait ceime do mhaire air an aonach,
'S gach caochan gorm 's a ghleann ri gaire.
Tha croinn naine, ro dhrinead nam fras,
Ag eiridh gu bras ad cho'aill;
'S filidh bhinn nan coillte fas
A' cuir faill ort le 'n oran maidne.
Ach c'aic a bheil ciar-im'eachd na ha oiche
(Red' ghnua) air sgiathan an shirein?
C'aic' a bheil aig duibhre a co'nuidh,
'S uaimh chosach nan reulta foillse,
Tra leanas tu'n ceime gu luath,
Mar shealgair gan ruaig 's na speuran;
Thus a' dire' nan aonach ard,
'S iads' air faoin-bheannta fas a leimnich?
'S aobhin do shiubhal a sholluis aigh,
A sgaoileas le d' dhearfa gach donionn,
'S is maifeach do chleachdan oir
A' tnamh siar 's do dhoigh ri pille'.
Le seachran ann dalla-cheo na h oi'che,
Cha ghlaic thu choidh' ann ad churfa;

'S doinionn nan cuanta gabhaidh
Cha feid gu brath a t iul thu.
Le gairm na ciuin-mhadain bidh t eiridh,
'S do ghnua fheilidh a' dufga' gean;
A' fogra' na h oich o gach aic'
Ach suil a bhaird nach faic do shollus.
Ach amhuil se aos-lia lag
Bidh tusa fathas a' d' aonar;
Do shiubhal 'sna speuran mall
'S tu dall mar mis'air an aonach.
Doilleir mar ghealach nan tra,
Bidh t anra 's tu shiubhal nan speur;
Gaifeamachd na maidne cha chluinn thu;
Mar na fuinn gun huadh ri eiridh.
An sealgair seallaidh fo'n raon
Ach chon fhaic e t aogas a' ti'ean;
Bruchda' a dheoir, 's e pille' fu smalan,
"A mhadai' mo ghraidh! threig a ghrian sin."
—Bidh aibhneas ann sin air sholluis na h oi'che,
Tra bhios Mac na foillse mar Thra'ul.

is pleasant. It is pleasant; but I see it not, for thou dost not dispel the night from the eye of the bard.

—BUT the mist of years, one day, may dim thy own countenance; and slow, like mine, may be thy steps of age on Morven. A dim circle, like thy sister, thou mayest wander through heaven, and forget the time of thy rising. The voice of the morning will call, but thou wilt not answer. The hunter from his hill will look for thy coming, but he shall not behold thee. The tear will start into his eye. “The beam of heaven,” he will say to his dogs, “hath failed us!” He will return to his booth in sadness. But the moon will shine in her brightness; and the blue stars, in their place, will rejoice.—Yes, O sun, thou wilt one day grow old in the heavens; and, perhaps, sleep in thy tomb, like Trathal.

DOST thou not remember, O sun, the car-borne chief? His steps before thee on the mountain were lovely. One day as he wandered on Gormal’s heath, the beauty of youth, like light, was around him. A spear was in either hand; and the shield of his father was broad, like thy face, before him. His ruddy cheeks rose beneath a dark helmet, and his hair descended in streams upon his neck. As he went, he whistled, careless, the song of heroes. A son of age rises before him on the heath. His eye is red: on his cheek there rests the tear. Sad is his voice of grief, and mournful sings in his gray hair the mountain-wind.

“I COME,” he said, “to ask thine help, if thou art Trathal king of spears. On the banks of the distant Dula, many heroes heard once the shield of Tual-arma, and many strangers in his hall have feasted. But heroes hear now the sound of my shield no more; and my halls, where blazed in the midst of songs the oak, are silent

lent, cold, and desolate. Mor-ardan saw the beauty of my daughter. No other child was mine. He loved her; but she heard him not. The wrath of his bosom was a fire that was concealed. He came on the sea with his skiff. Four rose upon his oars. Slif-gala and her father stood upon the shore. We are forced to go in the boat. The storm detains them now on thy coast. Give me, Trathal, one of these spears; and lend, thou first of men, thy aid."

TRATHAL heard the tale of grief. Joy and rage burned at once in his soul. He gave the spear, and fearless went: the murmur of his course was like a stream that is concealed. An host arose before him. The son of age behind them sunk. The king, in his wrath, half-lifted the spear; but his soul bade him spare the age of the feeble. "Stain not, Trathal," it said, "with his blood thy spear."

FIFTY spears are lifted; fifty swords shake their flames, like lightning, around him. Colgul rises in the midst. The joy of his face is dark; as fire in the pillar of smoke; as a meteor that sits on a cloud, when the moon of night is dark, and the woody mountains hear the storm.

—IN Dorineffa he had once pursued with Trathal the chase, and lifted with the king, in sport, the spear. But who could pursue the chace, who lift the spear with Trathal? The brown-eyed maid of Dorineffa fighed, as she beheld the king; and turned away her eye from Colgul. The chief in the darkness of his wrath retired, as retires a ghost on his sullen blast when he cannot tear the oak. He waits in the cave of clouds, till he come again in the roar of winds,

winds. Thus waited for a season Colgul; but now he comes with his thousands, when Trathal is alone.

THOU art alone, O Trathal; but thy thoughts are not of flight. Thy strength, like the contracted stream of Inar, grows. Thy soul, like the heaving ocean, swells in the roar of storms. Thy joy is terrible, like a spirit of night when he lifts his red head in the midst of meteors, and strides, in his dark-growing cloud, from hill to hill.

* * * * *

As the rolling of rocks from the top of hills; as the noise of waves when the tempest is high; or as groves when their dry hair is seized by flames through night,—such was the terror of the path of Trathal. Colgul and he were two mountain-streams in the strife: the sound of their steel was like the echo of the narrow vale when its green pines are felled.—Dreadful is their battle! Trathal is a storm that overturns the grove, and a wave that climbs the shore is Colgul †. But the eyes of Colgul reel in mist, as lights on his helmet the massy spear. Corran stands without his shield, like a rock which the lightning has bared. Duchonnis stops with his hand the red stream of his breast, and leans his back to a broken tree. The helmet of Crusollis glitters between his feet, with one half his head, before he falls: and the gray hair of Tual-arma is trampled in blood and dust, by the crowding feet of heroes.

COL-

† The original of this passage is so truly grand and terrible, that the translation gives but a very inadequate idea of it.

Chaidh Tra'al a sìos na eide,
Mar sgarnaich o mhuillach sleibhte;
Mar bhuinne-shruth fuaimneach oilteil,
No mar theine 'm falt nan coilltean.

Bha Colguil 'e seia mar dha shruth aonaich,
Chluinnte air gach taobh am beucaich;
B' airde fuaim am faobhar geala
Na toirm mhic-thalla 's croinn gan gearra.
Bha Tra'al mar neart na gasithe
Leagas giuthas Mhor'aian aobhach;
'Sbha Colguil mar luas nan feud-shruth
Bhies ri aodan shliabh ag eiridh.

COLGUL scatters from his red eyes the cloud. He sees his people in their blood around. Like the dark shadow of Lego's mist, he comes in silence behind the king. But he comes not unperceived. Trathal turns. Colgul flies. His steps are to the boat, and Trathal in his strength pursues him. A thousand arrows aim at the king. By one of them Colgul is pierced. He falls upon the shore, when one hand hath got hold of the boat. Trathal leaps into its dark womb, and turns upon the people of Colgul. He turns; but a blast drives him into the deep, and he bounds in the midst of his fame with joy.

THE spouse of Trathal had remained in her house. Two children rose, with their fair locks, about her knees. They bend their ears above the harp, as she touched, with her white hand, its trembling strings. She stops. They take the harp themselves; but cannot find the sound which they admired.—Why, they said, does it not answer us? shew us the string wherein dwells the song. She bids them search for it till she returns. Their little fingers wander among the wires.

SULANDONA looks for her love. The hour of his return is past.—“Trathal, where dost thou wander among streams; where has thy path erred among woods? From this height may I behold thy tall form; may I see the smiling joy of thy ruddy face. Between thy yellow locks of youth, thou lookest like the morning sun.”

SHE ascended the hill, like a white cloud of the melted dew, when it rises on early beams from the secret vale, and rushes scarce wave their brown tufted heads. She saw a skiff bounding on the deep: she saw on the shore a grove of spears.—“Surely they must
be

be foes that lift them; and Trathal is alone. Can one, tho' strong, contend with thousands?"

HER tries ascend upon the rock. The vales reply with all their streams. Youths rush from their mountains, and wildly tremble in their steps, for their king. They thought of rushing on the people of Colgul in their wrath; but Trathal raised on the deep his voice, and bade them stop the spear. They rejoiced when they heard the king, and saw him turn to the shore his ship.

THEY gathered about Colgul; but his face was dark, and the flame of his eye had failed. His people stood mournful around; but many of them had strewed the brown heath, like dry leaves on autumn's dusky plain when tempests shake the oak. We help them to raise their tombs; and first we dig the grave of Colgul.—A youth stoops to place beside him the spear. The mail, in rising, drops from two heaps of snow. Calmora falls above her love.—Sulindona, as she came, beheld her pale. She knew the daughter of Cornglas. Her tears fell over her in the grave: she praised the fair of Sorna.

"DAUGHTER of beauty, thou art low. A strange shore receives thy corse. But thou wilt rejoice on thy cloud, for thou sleepest in the tomb with Colgul. The ghosts of Morven will open their halls to the young stranger, when they see thee approach. Heroes around the feast of dim shells, in the midst of clouds, shall admire thee; and virgins in thy praise shall touch the harp of mist. Thou wilt rejoice, O Calmora †; but thy father, in Sorna, will be sad.

M m

His

† The whole of the song over Calmora is beautiful; but the following verses are exceedingly soft and tender.

Biaidh gearr órtfa a' d' néoil,
Ach t Athair ain Sorna biaidh dubhach:
Ag im'eachd air bile na tragha,

Thig

His steps of age will wander on the shore. The roar of the wave will come from the distant rock. 'Calmora,' lifting his gray head, he will say, 'is that thy voice?'—The son of the rock alone will reply. Retire to thy house, O Cornglas, retire from the stormy shore; for thy Calmora hears thee not. Her steps with Colgul are high on clouds. On moon-beams she may come, perhaps, to thy dreams, when silence dwells in Sorna. Daughter of beauty, thou art low; but thou sleepest in the tomb with Colgul!"

SUCH was the song over Calmora; but who could speak in praise of Colgul? He and his people came, like the cloud of death that rises from the cave of Lano, and creeps through night into the booth of the hunter, when his eyes are closed, and all the winds are quiet. Often have their ghosts sighed on the mournful mists that lowly creep along the tombs: often has their voice been lonely there.—But thou seest them not, O sun: they only come when darkness robes the hills; when all thy beams are away. But thou seest the ghost of Trathal; often does he stalk in thy beams at noon, when the hills around are covered with mist. Thou delightest to shed thy beams on the clouds which enrobe the brave, and to spread thy rays around the tombs of the valiant. Often do I feel them on the bed of Trenmor, and even now thou warmest the gray stone of Trathal. Thou rememberest the heroes, O sun: for their steps in thy presence were lovely; and before their time
thou

Thig ganraich nan tonn ga chluasan.
"An e fo do ghuth, inghean mo ghsol!"
—Tha ula aoida ri fionta' arda.
Pill gu talla nan corn-glas,

Pill o stoirm alluidh na traghia,
'S gun neach a' freagra' do ghlaoidh
Ach Mac-thalla † nam faoin-shaigh.

† *Mac-thalla*, "the son of the rock," is the Gaelic name for Echo.

thou hast shone on Morven. And thou wilt remember them in the time to come, O sun, when this gray stone shall be sought in vain. Yes: for, "Thou wilt endure," said the bard of ancient days †, "after the moss of time shall grow in Temora; after the blast of years shall roar in Selma."

† What bard Ossian refers to here is uncertain. He was possibly some one who had, by way of eminence, the title of "The bard of ancient times." It appears from the passage, that the art of poetry was by no means in its infancy in the days of Ossian. The excellency of his poems proves, that it had been long practised, and had then made a considerable progress. Some have supposed, that a great number of the Galic tales, which are in a language highly figurative and poetical, but not confined to numbers, have been the first essays in poetry, and long prior to the æra of verse. This is not improbable, as the warmth of the uncultivated imagination and the barrenness of language would naturally give rise to all the figures of rhetoric before art could reduce words to measure or numbers. As many of the tales which accompany the oldest of the Galic poems are of this figurative and poetical cast, they are a strong presumptive proof of the antiquity of the poems which they explain. They likewise afford a curious view of the Galic poetry in its most early stages.

DARGO THE SON OF DRUIVEL:

A P O E M *.

THE A R G U M E N T.

DARGO, the son of a chief Druid, having obtained some help from Scandinavia, is discovered landing by night on the coast of Mervin. Two of Fingal's scouts, who had gone to watch his motions, are worsted by him in single combat, and then sent to challenge Fingal to battle. Fingal devolves the command that day on Curach, a chief of Innishail. His father examines his arms; and relates to him an adventure of his early days to Iforno, which prepares us for the story of Ulan-forlo, near the end of the poem. In the engagement, Dargo is slain; and Curach, after losing one hand, and behaving with uncommon bravery, dies as he is retiring from the battle. Some reflections, suggested by a Druidical grove, and the poet's notions of the state of the dead, begin and end the poem. The scene is around the stream of Mervin; and the time seems to be the end of spring, or beginning of summer.

A SOUND comes by halves to my ear. It is like the voice of a wave that climbs, when it is calm, the distant rock. It is the voice of Struthan-dorcha's stream, murmuring, deep, in the vale of

* As the name of Dargo is frequent in the poems of Ossian, this hero is further distinguished by his patronymic of *Mac-Druig-Bel*, or "the son of the Druid of Bel," probably the Arch-druid of the Caledonian kingdom.

The Druids, for some generations back, had been at variance with the family of Fingal; and this seems to have been the

last struggle which they made for existence. They had got some aid from Scandinavia, and seem to have been no strangers to war themselves. But all their prowess, assisted with the incantations of their allies, was too weak to cope with a race of warriors. They were forced to submit; but their conquerors, having nothing to fear from them, permitted them

of oaks. In the bosom of its grove is the circle of stones. Dim unfinished forms sigh, within their gray locks, around it. The sons of the feeble hear the sound; and, trembling, shun the awful shadowy spot. "The haunt of ghosts," they say, "is there."

BUT your voices are no terror to the bard, spirits of dark night, pale-wandering around your awful stones. No: I tried the strength of your arm when alive; I lifted my spear in battle against your mighty Dargo, against the terrible son of Druivel.

A TALE of the years that have fled, on their own dun wings, over Morven.

THE chase was over in the heath. The wearied sons of the mountain laid themselves down to rest; their bed of moss is in the shade of groves. The hills robed themselves in the folds of darkness, and the heroes feasted in Selma. Song on song deceived, as was wont, the night*; and the sound of harps arose. The howling of gray dogs is heard, in the calm of the song. Their place is on the top of their rock, and their look is towards the dark-rolling of ocean. Our scouts repair to its shore; Sulinroda of quickest fight, and Calcoffa, foot of speed.

SHOULDST thou not now arise, half-wasted moon, from thy bed of heath; should not thy horn appear above the rock of Morven? Lift it, fair light; look down, through trees, on the sleeping roes, and

them to retire to their shades, and die in obscurity.—This poem begins with the following lines:

The suaim an chluais fein,
Mar thonn ann cein air muir shalmhe;
Do ghlaodh, Shruthain-dorcha, 'se t'ann,
Ri torman ann gleann nan geugan.
'N ad dhoirre tha ra' nan clach?
'S faibhse cianail 'nan glai-eide.
" 'S tiamhaidh se!"

*Till of very late the custom of spending the winter-night in the tale and song prevailed universally in the Highlands. This gave the mind a stock of ideas and sentiments which it can never derive from the few red and black spots which constitute the great amusement of a politer age and a more polished people.

* *Sulin-*

and let the stream of Cona glitter in thy beam. Point out to our scouts the way ; and if the dark path of strangers be on the nightly deep, lead them to the feast of Selma. The gate of Fingal stands always open, and bids the benighted traveller to come in.—Break through your clouds, stars of night ; Uloicha, pour thy beam !

—BUT you slumber on your beds, ye lights of heaven. The darkeft clouds are your covering ; and thick mists, fold on fold, like Offian's robe, conceal you. No ray breaks through. The heath is dark ; and no beam trembles on the sea, save where breaks the wave upon a rock, and sends abroad its found. Ghosts hear it, as in their ships of mist they pass, and bid their mariners turn away their sails.—Rise, O moon, on the hill of heath ; break through your clouds, ye stars of night : Uloicha, pour thy beam !

GRAY morning half-appears. The heads of the mountains see it, and rejoice. A low murmur comes on the breeze ; it grows on the ear of our scouts. It is the buzz of the morning flies, on their dusky cloud, said Sulinroda*. The hum of the mountain-bees, said Calcoffa, coming forth from their mossy hive. The traveller with his careless foot hath touched it ; and their thousands rush forth to war.—Nor flies of the morning, nor bees of the mountain, make the noise, replied Sulinroda ; is not that an host on the shore, moving through that column of mist, like the moon of night in her steps of silence ?

THE scouts, abashed, return. They did not perceive the host till day arose ; and how shall they behold the mild face of the king ? Blushing, they walk with unequal steps : on earth they often pitch their quivering steel. At the foot of a gray rock, as
they

* *Sulin-roda*, " a discernor of roads ;" *Calcoffa*, " light or swift of foot."

they pass, they halt. One hand beats their breast; the other strokes their beard. A broken stream leaps down from cliff to cliff: it falls, a thick shower in their wandering hair. But the scouts perceive it not; far distant, in the caves of thought, is their silent soul.

At length the bursting sigh of Sulinroda rose. The eagle heard it in the cleft of her rock. She shook her fluttering wings, and the souls of the chiefs awake. "Let us demand the combat of heroes, and return with our fame to the king."

THEY went, like two mountain-streams that rush, white, from the heathy hills, and join in the vale of trees their force. They sweep the earth and stones before them in their course, and toss on every side, amidst foam, their rooted trees. The boy, from his distant rock, beholds with fear their terrible beauty. He grasps in his hand the bending oak, as beholding them he backward leans.—Such streams were the scouts of Morven; but in the son of Druivel they met a sea.—Calcoffa first is bound. Sulinroda next maintains the terrible fight; but who could fight with Dargo? The hunter hears their noise, as he sleeps beneath the shelter of his rock; he thinks the passing thunder hath torn its crumbling brow, and he trembles in his dream. The roe sees him, as silent-bounding she steals by with her son, the dun kid with the long feet. She wonders he does not fly for safety, like her, to the stream of the distant wood. She shakes her head, as she flies. The thought of her soul is, "Hunter, thou art not wise."

THE echo of arms descended on my morning dream in Selma. I stretched my hand, in my sleep, to grasp the spear. The
next

next breeze drove a louder sound against my ear ; I sprang awake,
and struck the bos.

THE king arose. The shield of Morven sent abroad its sound.
The heroes rushed from their hills, like the path of whirlwinds in
withered oaks. In their course are a hundred sons of Innisfail.
They saw the son of Druivel with his gathered host. They saw
his banners float, with their blended colours, in air. " Give me,"
he says, " the equal combat."

HIS chiefs brightened before Fingal. But the youths of Innisfail
were strangers. They stood, each bending forward as he
grasped the spear. Their eyes, under their helmets, were fixed on
the king: they seemed like silent meteors under dark clouds, when
trembling groves see them from afar, and the bounding of roes is
to the rock of the desert.—In the midst of their souls they spoke;
but no voice of theirs was heard. Fingal saw their eyes were
flames of battle; and his own people had already got their fame:
the children of distant streams spoke of the heroes of Morven.

CURACH, said the king, lead thou the battle with thy heroes of
Innisfail. But, Ossian, let thy shield be near: it has often been a
rock that sheltered the oak of the mountain, when its head was
bending beneath the storm, and the crashing of groves was heard
around.

THE aged chief of Sliruth, leaned to the trunk of a pine that had
been torn, from its dark rock on high, by angry ghosts, or eddy-
winds. With one hand he, thoughtless, pulled off its gray moss;
in the decayed strength of the other, he still held his father's spear:
its gleam was hid beneath the growing crust of years. There, the
days of his youth rolled themselves, a silent stream, over his soul.

N n

AN

All the murmur of their course, as they passed, was the low hum of a song. He wished it might travel with his fame to the years to come.—But when he heard his son named for the battle, the thoughts of other years retired. Between his gray-hanging locks arose the smile, as he turned his eye to see his son. He turned his eye, but his sight had failed. The night of age around him is dark: its mists are thick; no light will dispel their gloom.

“TAKE, Curach,” he said, “this spear. Often have the valiant, like dry leaves, strewed its path in war. Wield it like thy fathers. My eye is dim: but let them behold thee from their clouds, that their faces of mist may rejoice.—

“Let me feel, my son, thy sword, since age hath dimmed the eye of Sorglan*. Let me feel thy sword; is it sharp and strong for the battle? Let me feel thy shield; is it a rock of brass in danger?—It is; but strengthen its thongs: I wore them not so weak in the days of my youth, when I bounded to the battle of spears; when the blood, like a mountain-stream, leapt in my veins for joy.

“CURACH, thy father, in his youth, was a tempest that rushed through the ranks of war. Seven heroes attended once my steps in Iforlo. We pursued, three days, its deer. The pride of Ulthorran rose. Never before, he said, was I distanced at the chase.—On the shore he burnt our boat; and twenty of his people he ordered at night to seize us in our cave. Iulornio, that beam of beauty in his halls, had heard his words. She saw the face of her father dark, as the cloud of Lano before the storm. She loved my
steps

* *Sorglan*, “open and generous;” *Curach*, “rage of battle;” *Sliruth*, “streamy hill.”

steps on the heath. My image grew a lovely tree within her soul, and she trembled for the growing blast. 'If it lay thy green branches low, no leaf of mine,' she said, 'shall flourish; no voice of the spring shall awake my beauty.'—In the evening we found the beam of light in our cave. Her yellow locks wandered, on her blushing face, in the midst of tears, as she told the tale of death.—'Shun,' she said, 'the cave this night; but tell not the steps of Iulorno were nigh it. The soul of my father is dark, as the gathering of night in the narrow house; why should he know that his daughter loves the chief of Sliruth?'

"SHE sunk in her cloud, and retired; like the moon of heaven when she hath shewn the bewildered traveller his path on the heath. He was wandering thoughtless on the face of a rock; the beam shone around him: quick he turns his steps; and blesses the light that saved him.

"WE fought with the warriors of night, and prevailed. We went for Iulorno, but the steel of her father had pierced her breast. Nigh his gate we found her in her blood. She was fair as the dying swan on the foam of the stream of Lano, when the arrow of the hunter is in her breast, and her down is lifted by the breath of gales.—Her brother asked her why she would not rise; and asked us, wondering, why we wept?—I gave the child a sword of light. I reared the tomb of the fair, on the shore of her native land.—Moon-beams shine on the place when all is dark around; and virgin-ghosts breathe there, on the passing breeze, their song. The soul of Iulorno is with them in mist; the music of her voice is mournful. Through every warm shower, the sun smiles on her green turf, and bathes its rays in the dew of her tomb.—Three

N n 2

days

days our tears fell on the grave of Ialorno; on the fourth we sailed in the ship of Ulthorran.—Such, Curach, were the early deeds of Sorglan; be thy fame, my son, like that of thy father.”

* * * * *

As the eagle comes, rustling with joy, from her rock, when she sees her prey, the young fawn, sleeping in his dun mossy bed below; such was the joy of Curach as he bounded down to battle. The murmur of his people followed his steps: their sound was like the noise of a stream, when it travels beneath a rock; like the thunder hid in earth, when the woods shake their heads, but no fiery cloud singes their blasted beard.—Dargo came on, red eye of battle, rolling along his hoofs, like the stream of Balva. Silent and slow, but deep and strong, is its course*.

On either side of Moruth's stream the heroes stride. A while admiring each other they stand. With joy they bound on their spears, and meet in the midst of the dark rolling flood. Over them bend in stormy clouds their hosts, and mix around them steel with steel.

† Some verses describing the manner in which the different companies repaired to their respective standards are here repeated, but their inaccuracy forbids a translation. They are somewhat curious, as they give the names of the different standards. On this account, a few of them are here annexed.

Chuir sinn amach a dh'fhulang dorainn
Bratach Fhear'ais oig mo bhrathar,
'S thog sinn amach bratach Obaoilte
'N Lia'luideagach sobhach anrach.
Thogadh a fuas mo bhratach fein,
'S a folus mar gheith an duibhe;
'S thog sinn amach an Lia'luimneach,
Bratach Dhlarmaid oig e Duibhne, &c.

* Some repeat here a description of a general onset; but, as the following sen-

tence gives reason to suspect that it is rather a part of some other poem on the like subject, it is omitted. The verses, however, on account of their poetical merit, are here set down in the original.

'N sin chuaidh sinn ann dail a chelle,
Sleigh nan Druidhean 's Suinn na Feine,
'S bu luaithe na greanna-ghaath earraich
Sinn a' dol ann tas na t eug-bhoil.
Na bu luaithe na milte do shruthaibh
A' ruith ann an fùgan o ardaibh,
Bhiodh a beucaich gu treun meannach
Le teirm gheamhradh o gach fàfach.
Cha bheacadh treun thonn na tuine,
Nuair bhuail e ri creagan arda
Le neart na gaoi' tuath 's ann sìthoilteach,
Cha stuadhadh ri gaoir an ard-chath.
—Ceart choi'm eas comhrag nam fear
Cho'n shaca mi riabh ri m' latha.

steel. Here the stream runs red. There it breaks white over shields. Blood rests, curdled, on the ooze of its stones; and heroes swell, in their death, the tide.

BUT who shall give to the song the rage of battle! The shield of Curach falls from its broken thong. He reaches his hand to grasp it. The sword of Dargo cuts it off. Clung to the shield, it swims along the stream. But still the other hand is left.

THREE steps he retires. His sword leaps from its dark sheath: its light gleams in air, on high. "Spread, Oðian, before me thy shield; but lift not thy spear against the foe. The same of the warrior shall arise, only, when foes have the equal combat."

I WILL not fight with the wounded foe, said Dargo. My fame, in his death, would not arise. Retire, and think of battles that are past. I will contend with that son of the king beside thee.

CURACH goes. In his eye is the flame of battle. Lying on earth, he spied a shield: its owner beside it sleeps, nor hears he the din of war. "Bind it, Conchana, with all its thongs to my breast. I will elsewhere reap the field. They shall not see that Curach's hand hath failed."

My spear was lifted against Dargo, as he rose on the bank of the stream. With the stroke he stumbles back: a withered oak is grasped in his fall. The crashing of arms, of branches, and of bones, is mixed.

He rose, and leaned against the tree in his place. His hand lifted still the sword; but I spared the decay of his strength. Around him his people fall, like the withered leaves of the oak before the wintry blast. The stream leaps, bubbling, over their heads; and spreads, around stones, their hair. Helmets lift,
here

here and there above the stream, their nodding plumes.

LIFT, said Dargo, thou son of the king, thy sword; I am not fallen yet.—I lift mine, said Curach, as he came, rushing through the storm of the battle, and strewing men and branches, with his lightning, along the stream: I lift mine, he said, as it descended, a flash that blasts the oak, on Dargo.

THE chief fell in the stream. Its banks echoed around. His people shrunk back in their place.—But Cuthon† still rolled our heroes in their distant wing, as the whirlwind rolls the pillar of dust; as the blast sweeps over a plain of ice the driven snow. I turned my steps to meet him; but Fergus was before me. His soul of battle burned at the sight of Cuthon: his eye was like a stream of fire on a cloud of night. He bends forward with the joy of a young eagle, when it sees its dun prey from Moruth's top. It spreads its wings on the stream of winds; but the bounding son of the roe hears the rustling of his course, and retires beneath his trees.

CUTHON, a while, stood terrible in his place; like a nightly ghost when he rests on Lena. He seizes the meteors of heaven as they pass; he clothes his dark limbs in their terrors, and meditates again the war of clouds above the trembling nations. So stood Cuthon, girding anew his arms: but he saw his people vanish; and fide-long, he slowly, angrily, retired.—Twice, as he went, he turned in the midst of his doubts, and stood like the stream of the vale of Balva*, where it knows not which way to turn its course.—He looks at length to the place where his father fought. He sees his red hair wandering on the breast of the stream.

In

† The son of Dargo.

* Balva, "a still stream."

In one hand he still grasps the sword; in the other he firmly holds the mossy oak. Cuthon wildly runs. He lifts a mournful load. He bears his father to his hill: the rattling of his arms, and the voice of his sighs, are mixed.

WE slowly returned to the king. A little rill met us on the heath. Curach tries to bound over it on his spear: but across it the hero is stretched. The gurgling stream climbs his bossy shield; and leaps, gray, over his wounded breast.

GIVE, Offian, he faintly said, give this sword to my son. In the green rushy vale of Sliruth he pursues the tufted down, as it flies on the wing of sporting ghosts. Near him the water leaps from the height of rocks: between two woody banks it falls; the sound, deep-murmuring, rises on my boy's ear. "I hear," he says, "the steps of my father."—With the unequal pace of joy he runs to meet me; but he sees the gray stream.—Return, my child, and pursue thy down; my eye will gladden with joy, as I behold thee from my hovering cloud.—Tell him, Offian, how his father died; that the battle may grow in his soul, when the years of his strength shall rise.—*Oi-lamin*† prepares for me the robe. Her tears fall as she bends over the loom. A thought comes across her soul, and her white hand supports her waving head.—*Oi-lamin*, thy fears are true; thy hero lies now on *Moruth's** heath!—Spare then, my love, thy toil. The gray passing mist shall yield a robe to Curach.

WE opened the tomb for the chief; and raised, amidst the voice of the bards, the stones of his fame. The sound reached the ear of his father; as, bending forward, he listened for the return of his

† *Oi-lamin*, "soft-handed virgin."

* *Moruth*, "great stream."

his son. He thought he was coming with the song of his fame, and he stretched his hand to search for him. The mournful song of the tomb strikes louder upon his ear.—“And has thy father now no son, O Curach!”

His came, groping through darkness for his way. He stumbled on the heath over a hero, whose soul had been travelling through the path of wounds. “How weak,” he said with a sigh, “is now become the chief of Shiruth!”

THE wounded half-raised his head over a broken shield, that had been fixed with the head of a lance to his breast. “Was the chief of Shiruth,” he said, “even in Iſorno?—If thou wilt, take this sword; perhaps thou mayst know it. A beam of light I received it, when young. No more shall Ulan-forno lift it.”

THE memory of the past rushed, like a torrent, into the stream of Sorglan’s grief. We heard the bursting of his crowded sigh over the brother of Iſorno, the early beam of his love.

WE bore the two to the grave of Curach. Sorglan felt the place where he was soon to rest. And Ulan-forno faintly bade us raise, with the mighty, his tomb. “Send to my hall,” he said, “this athen spear; it may support, in place of me, an aged mother. But no son, no young spouse of mine, is there to behold it. Ulan-forno dies like the young oak on the solitary mountain, when the spirits of Lano breathe over the desert. Its roots are torn by the blast; and no tender shoot from its trunk shall spring. Raise here my tomb, heroes of Morven: send home my spear.”

AND thy spear shall be sent, said the king; but is that all thy mother shall receive in place of her son! Now the oak flames bright in her hall. The song of the bard is up. He compares the

the bright blaze to the fame of her son. Joy trembles in her aged soul, and the tear of gladness grows upon her cheek. "The fame of Ulan-forno," she says, "shall be a sun to my evening steps. A streak of light on the mountain shall be the decay of my years. The young shall bless the mother of Ulan-forno."

SHE stops to wipe the tear of joy from her dim sight. The shield emits a fainter sound. The colour of its boss is stained: the face of the aged is pale with fear.—The gray dog howls without. Does he mourn; or does he see the coming of Ulan-forno?—The aged bard goes out to see. He rests at the door upon his spear: his eye travels through the blue land of night. He sees a ridge of clouds sailing, on the blast, across the sea. He knows the heroes of his land have fallen. He bids their hall of air to open, and their fathers bend to receive them. He sees Ulan-forno move before the rest, a taller form. A star dim-twinkles through the dun eagle-wing of his crest. Dark-wandering streams mark his broken shield; like the black ooze of the mountain-rock, which points the course of the melted snow.—The cloud varies its form. The bard returns. His face is dark as the meteor at which he looked. His harp is in his hand; but its voice is mournful.—"Hang it in its place, O bard," the passing form seems to say; "for in Morven we have our fame."

YES, rider of eddying winds, thou didst receive thy fame in Morven. The king himself was not silent in thy praise, when Sor-glan, with the image of Iulorno in his soul, shed over thee the tear; and the bards mixed thy name with the song of Curach.—Often do I still remember thy name, when thou comest on thy northern blast, to hover above the field of thy fame. The chil-

O o

dren

dren admire thy tall form. "A ghost," they say, "bends over Moruth; the dim path of the spear is in his shield and breast; and we faintly see, through the mark, the burning stars."—I hear them, and know it is Iforno's chief. I teach the children the song of his fame. They say that Dargo, at times, is with him; that the winds lift the red meteor that forms his hair, and that the gray oak is still beside him†.—I rejoice in their visits to our hill, where no ghost of the departed molests them. No; the feuds of other years, by the mighty dead, are forgotten. The warriors now meet in peace, and ride together on the tempest's wing. No clang of the shield, no noise of the spear, is heard in their peaceful dwelling. Side by side they sit, who once mixed in battle their steel*.

There,

† The poet supposes the oak to be as essential a neighbour to the Druid in the next world as it was in this.

* Ossian, on several occasions, shews a liberality of sentiment which does honour to his character. Here he not only allows future happiness to his enemies; but, well judging the little differences of this world of too small importance to be renewed beyond the grave, wishes for the most cordial reconciliation. Those who were at variance here, as he elsewhere expresses it, "stretch their arms of mist to the same shell in Loda." (Poem of Oi-na-morul.)

Such has been the fate of the Galic poetry, that its most beautiful passages are generally those which have been most objected to. To suppress any of them, on this account, would be as cowardly, as it would be presumptuous to treat the prejudices that are against them with in-

difference. Every body has as much right in this case to judge for himself as the translator has, who does all he can to put this in their power, by laying before them the words of the original.

Cusirt nam slath gur ait leam fein

Gu aonach nan tannas gun bheum.

Far chiurre' gach falachd air cul

Sa bheil na foid a dh'aon run.

Tha codhail nan Cathan ann fith

'S iad air sgiathan na doininn gun stri'.

Gun bheum-sgeithe gun sgarum lainne

'N co'nuidh thofdach na caomb-chlainne.

Tha sliochd Lochlinn is Ehin, gu h'ard.

Ag eisdeachd caithream nan aona bhard;

An uigh cho'n eil tuille ri stri'

'S gun vireas' air siothann no fri'.

Tha'n suil air na bliana' a threig.

(Le snotha gun ghean mar mi fein).

'S air raon nan rua'bhoc le io'nadh,

On glas-eideadh air mbarcachd shine.

—Mar sgeul nam bliana' chaidh seach.

Air iteig aonaich, le'n ciar-dhreach,

Tha aising na beatha dhuibh's a Fhlaitibh;

Mar tha dhambha Dearg nan cathaibh.

There, Lochlin and Morven meet at the mutual feast, and listen together to the song of their bards. Why should they any more contend, when the blue fields above are so large, when the deer of the clouds are so many? Like me, they look back with a smile on the years that are past, and sigh at the memory of the days that will no more return. They look down on the earth, as they ride over it, on their gray-white clouds, and wonder why they contended.—Yes, heroes of happier climes! you look back on the dream of life, as Ossian does on the battle of Dargo.—It is a tale of the years that have fled, on their own dun wings, over Morven.

CUTHON * THE SON OF DARGO:

A P O E M.

THE A R G U M E N T.

DARGO, whose death is related in the preceding poem, being sent away in the night to his place of burial, Ossian and Suloicha reconnoitre the enemy. Some of their incantations and superstitious rites are mentioned. The attitude of Cuthon the son of Dargo is described. On hearing the shield of Fingal they return, and meet in their way with a wounded hero, from whose story Suloicha becomes much interested in his favours.—An affecting incident occurs in passing by Cuirach's tomb.—The command, this day, is given to Fergus the son of Fingal. His descent to battle, and that of Cuthon, described; with their engagement.—Fingal, coming to the assistance of his son, puts an end to the battle. Cuthon, leaving the field, dies of his wounds.—He is reconciled to Fingal, His people are invited to the feast; and a lasting peace is concluded, by means of Lugar, whose story is given.—The poem is addressed to the pine that covered the grave of Cuirach; and the scene is the same with that of the preceding poem.

THE wind of heaven whistles in the moss of thy gray branch,
tall pine of Moruth! The blast bends thy withered top, and
strews thy gray hair, like mine, around. Our strength is fled on
the

* *Cu-thonn*, or contracted *C'onn*, "the voice of waves." This poem is connected with the foregoing; the title of it in the original is generally expressed by these verses:

Sgeulachd air C'onn mac an Deirg,
Air a Rona' le trom fheirg;
Dèd a dhìob'bas aithar gun fheall,
Air naillibh 's air maithibh na Feine.

"The tale of Cuthon the son of Dargo, when he rushed in his wrath to revenge the death of his innocent father, on Fingal's heroes."

The address to the pine of Moruth is natural; as also the poet's passion for assimilating every object to the state of his own mind. In the absence of his beloved:

the wings of years : years that return not again, from the dark wandering of their flight along the streams of the desert.---But we were not thus weak, when roared on the heath of Moruth the strife of battle ; when trembled the wide-skirted field beneath the steps of the terrible Cuthon.---Dost thou not remember the strife of Cuthon, gray-haired pine of Moruth ? It was in the days of thy youth ; and thy memory, like the bard's, may have failed. It may have failed ; but the light of the days that are past, though dim, is pleasant.

A TALE of the years that will no more return from the dark wandering of their trackless course over the heath of the desert.

THE battle of Dargo was over ; and the heroes reposed themselves on their shields. Beneath thy branches, O pine, which then were green, three stones, children of the stream, reared on high their oozy heads. We bade them tell to future times where we laid the mighty Curach. Beside him I leaned that night, on my shield ; when sleep, like the cloud of Ardven, spread over my soul its mist. But the forms of other times beamed on my mind, as the sun on Cona's winding-stream, when the shadowy hills are dark, and mists are on the head of deer. Curach rose from the midst of a cloud before me, such as lately he appeared in the field. The fire of battle was still in his eye ; and a faint meteor, like a sword, lighted his path through darkness. A blast lifted his dusky shield ; no finewy arm was below, to grasp its thong. I knew the ghost
of

loved Malvina, and every other human friend, this personification became necessary ; and the contrast between the present and past days renders it not disagreeable.---The story of Lugar, or *Dan Liughair*, towards the end of the poem, is

generally recited as a detached piece. But as this seemed to be its proper place, it was restored to it, and a sentence or two of the other poem transposed towards the end of it.

of my friend. A while he stalked before me, mournful; and often the blast had whirled his limbs together; but still he seemed like Curach.

"WHY sleeps Offian?" he said, as bending over me, on the breast of his blast, he leaned: "Should the warriors of Morven rest, when danger rolls in 'darkness around them?"—He took the pine of Moruth by the head, and shook it as he flew. Amidst a shower of rustling leaves, I awoke from my dream, and kindled the flame in the withered oak. The wanderers from the host of Cuthon beheld it, and retired. I called for the scout. He came. His steps had been over Moruth; he had been viewing the hosts of the foe.

DARGO they had sent to the green isle, where his fathers rest*. Dark-bending over them spreads an aged oak. Its waving branches are worn by the gray mossy stones that lift their head in its shade. Bards sing there to Dargo's praise; and the forms of his fathers are seen above, dark-musing, on their misty clouds. Their red eyes are sad, for they behold the fall of their son.

WITH Suloicha the scout, I cross in silence the stream of Moruth. We hear the voice of the sons of Loda, as, three times, they call on the spirits of their fear. We hear their shrieks going round the stone of their power.

"Roll," they said, "ye vapours of Lano, that bring death to the

* This isle is supposed to be that of Iona, to which the last remains of the Druids, according to bishop Pocock, had retired. Its ancient name was *Ianis-Druinach*, or "The isle of the Druids." They were in possession of it till St Columba fixed upon it for the seat of his monastery, towards the end of the 6th century. Their burial-place is still shewn, at a due distance from the consecrated ground allowed for the repose of their Catholic brethren.

the people; roll your dark-red columns on the hill of the foe. Descend, Loda, into their dreams with thy terrors. Rise before them in thy awful form. Spread around the flames of thy lightning, and let the thunder of thy course be heard.—Roll, vapours of Luno, round the foe. Loda, descend to their dreams with thy terrors *.”

NOR silent stood the gray sons of other times †, when the children of Loda spoke. They called; nor did they call in vain. The friends of Dargo heard them, as they passed in their rustling blast. Enrobed in meteors they came, and shone, at times, around Dargo's son. Often had the strangers fled with fear from the sign, liketheroe from the hill of heath, when it waves its crackling flames before her. Bounding she flies to the secret vale of her wood, nor waits she to look behind. So, often fled the mighty from the danger of the race of Dargo. But no danger did the king of Morven dread, though some of his heroes were half afraid.

We saw, as we viewed the foe, the son of Dargo by himself retired. Now, thoughtful, on his gleaming spear he bends. Now he shakes

* The Scandinavians used incantations so much, that, in later times, every scrap of their learning and of Runic poetry was supposed to contain some powerful magical charm.—This passage is in a different measure from the rest of the poem. The numbers have in them a sort of wildness and ferocity highly adapted to the subject and occasion of them.

A cheo na Lanna!
Uambar alle,
Air dhath na fala,
Taog o'n chala gun deisinn.
Taom, a Lodda!
Fraoch do chorrugh,

'S Hen le oglo'ehd
Aisling's brollach na Feine.
N am fradharc eirich
A'd chruth eitti';
Torran shleibhte
'S lafeir speur ga d' cho'dach.
A cheo na Lanna
Aom nan cara';
'S buair an cadal
A chruth Lodda nan leir-threach.

† The poet here means the Druids. It would appear from the following lines, that they had the art of kindling some sulphureous matter, in order to strike terror into their enemies by that phenomenon. See *History of the Druids*, p. 73.

shakes his arm, and tosses on earth his heavy spear. Quivering it stands. Its studs tremble in moon-beams that glitter through oaken trees. We saw the thoughts of battle and of grief shake, by turns, his soul. The ghost of his father came. On a dark cloud that obscured the moon, he thoughtful leaned. He appeared like the gray-musing son of a rock, when his thoughts are of other worlds *. His red hair streams on winds; and his sighs are heard, like the voice of the breeze in Lego's reedy banks, when the ghosts of the dead wander there in mournful mists, without their fame.

THE shield of Fingal sounds. The hills with all their rocks reply. The roes hear it, and start from their mossy bed. The fowls hear it, and shake, in the desert-tree, their fluttering wing. The wolf, wanderer of night, hath heard it, as he made for the slaughtered field, in hopes of prey. Sadly growling, he returns to his den; his hungry eye is red.—Shun his path, ye children of the deer.

WE directed our steps to the king. Suloicha looked if the gray stars had retired in the east. His foot stumbled; it was on one of Dargo's chiefs. At the side of a gray rock he leaned. Half a shield is the pillow on which rests his head; over it wanders in blood his hair.—Why, he said, do thy wandering steps disturb the warrior's repose, when he can no longer lift the spear? Why didst thou banish, like a blast of the desert, my dream; for I had seen the lovely Roscana? My soul might have fled with the beam of my love; why didst thou call it back from its flight?

P p

WHAT

* By this is meant either a contemplative Culdee or Druid.

WHAT was that beam of thy love, Roscana? replied Suloicha*. Was she fair as the down of the mountain; were her eyes like stars that sparkle through the thin shower; was her voice like the harp of Ullin; were her steps like the wave of the breeze, when it softly pours on the scarce-bending grass; and her form like the moon sailing in silence from cloud to cloud, in the calm of night? Didst thou find her, like the swan, borne on the breast of the wave; lovely, though lonely, in her grief?—Yes, thou didst; and that Roscana was mine. Stranger, what hast thou done with my love?—

“ ON the bosom of the wave I found the fair. In her skiff she had been sailing to the cave of her isle. There, she said, a chief of Morven was to meet her. But he did not come. I solicited her love, and invited her to I-una’s plain. For three moons she bade me wait. Suloicha, she said, perhaps may come. Faster than the last moon she pined away. Before its light was quite gone, she failed. Like the green pine of I-una, which withered in its youth, she failed: its branches, by the blast, are left bare, and the children of music forsake its boughs.—On the shore of the isle, I raised the tomb of the fair. Two gray stones are there half-sunk in earth. A yew spreads its dark branches nigh: a murmuring fount breaks from the ivy rock above, and bathes the foot of the mournful tree. There sleeps the lovely Roscana. There the mariner, when he moors his vessel in the stormy night, beholds her fair ghost, enrobed in the whitest of the mountain-mist. ‘Thy form,’ he says, ‘is lovely, O Roscana; fairer than my sails is the cloud of thy robe.’—Such have I seen her now in my dream; why was

* *Suloicha*, “one that sees well at night;” *Roscana*, “fair countenance.”

was not my soul allowed to fly with the lovely beam of light? Come back to my dreams, O Roscana; thou art a beam of light, when all is dark around!"

CHIEF of I-una, thou hast raised the tomb of my love! If no herb of the mountain can heal thy wounds, thy gray stone and thy fame shall rise on Morven.—Roscana! hast thou pined for me? Young tree of Moi-ura, are all thy green branches withered?—The wars of Fingal called me; I sent the scout; but neither his skiff nor he have since been seen. In the morning, my first look was on the deep; and in the evening the last cast of my eye was on the main. Through night, my head leaned over the rock; but I beheld Roscana only in my dream. Chief of I-una!—but thy voice has failed. Thy face, amidst moon-beams, is pale: thy eyes are flames that are dead. Friend of my Roscana! thy tomb shall rise.

LIKE the fall of a lofty oak in the calm gathering of night, when the woods and rocks shake with the sound, the shield of the king again is heard. It calls his people together. We bend on our spears with the steps of speed; our way is by the tomb of Curach.—Who mourns in silence on its green turf? he heeds not either the shield of the king, or the gray dawn of the morning. It is Cossagalla. He missed his master at home. His ears are up, upon his rock: he snuffs the wind in all its points: he turns to every breeze that shakes the tufted grass; but his master is not there. No rustling leaf, no sparrow's wing in the wood, stirs unobserved by Cossagalla. But Curach is not come. He seeks his steps in the battle. He finds his hand on the edge of the stream: the foam around it is stained with blood. Mournful he bears it with him,

and his stream of tears descend. He lights, as he walks along, on Curach's grave. On his breast, above it, the white-footed dog is stretched. Under his neck lies the arm.—I see him as I pass: the tear is in my eye: I think of the white-breasted dog and Oscar *.—A moment I lean on the head of my spear: the crowding of grief hath swelled my soul. But I must not forget the battle. I step aside to bring the mourner with me; but he will not come. Three times his howl is heard; his soul in the cry is gone. Ah! thou art cold as the clay of earth; no breath is in Cossagalla. Why this dimness of my sight? My soul of battle fails. But the shield again awakes it. His heroes are gathered around the king.

LIKE the many rays of the sun glittering through the watery cloud, when the hunter fears the storm; so, thick rise before Comhal's son the gleaming spears of Morven and Innisfail. Curach is low. A thousand heroes look in silence on Fingal. Who shall have the battle?—Fergus stands behind: no field of such fame had yet been his. In his hand he holds his spear: without thought he tears away the rough beard of its shaft; the mark of its strife in war. His breast beats with hope. Battles swell in his soul: the blood glows in all his veins. His eyes are two stars in watery mist, when

* Alluding to the death of Oscar, and the grief of Bran on that occasion; a scene so affecting, that few passages of Ossian are oftener repeated than that which describes it in these beautifully-tender lines, which I may be pardoned for giving in the original, as the translation is already so well known.

—Chruinnich iad uime na sùlaigh,
S gach aon neach ri buirich thrugh;
Cha chaoineadh Athair a mhac fein,
S cha ghulleadh a hhrathair e:

*Cha chaoineadh pàrtair a brathair,
"S cha chaoineadh mathair a mac;
—Ach iad uile anns a phlosgail,
A gair-chaoine" mo chaoimh Ofsair.*

“Donnalach nan eon rem thaobh,
Agus buirich nan sean Laoch,
Gul a phànnail fo co fàithnach,
Sud is mo a chraidh mo chroidhe.
Cha d' fheadh d'fne roimhe riabh
Gur eoidhe feola bh' ann am chliabh;
Ach eoidhe do chuibhne cuir,
Air a cho'dacha le stailinn,” &c.

TEMORA, B. I.

when the night is silent, and the winds are retired to the desert. Over heroes that stand between, they view the mild face of Fingal.

WHERE, said the king, is the young eagle that rushed so late, with rustling wings, through the paths of danger? No light staff in a boy's hand was thy spear, my son; it was no thistle's down with which it strewed the field. I see its beamy shaft marked with the scars of battle.—This day, be thou first in danger and in fame. Near thee, on his rock, shall be the steps of thy father: be like the eagle among the fowls of the heath, strong-winged son of Morven.—Bid the mighty bow before thee, but bind up the wounds of the feeble. The fame of heroes grows, as fall before them the proud in arms. But if the blood of a low-laid foe is on their spear, bards give their name no room in the song, and heroes turn away on their gray clouds when their ghosts appear in the course of winds. Fergus, spare the low; but when the mighty oppose, be thy arm like a grove on fire. My voice on the heath shall be a breeze; it shall raise on high the flame.

LIKE the dark-rolling of a tempest, when it shakes the deep with all its illes, and heaves the white-headed billows, like mountains of snow, upon the shore of rocks; so Cuthon with his host came on. The aged hunter hears the sound, as he rises in the woody vale, from the foot of a rock, on the mossy bed where slept the roe. He turns about his ear. “It may be the deep murmur of thunder, rolling along the distant heath; but I see not the lightning, in its course, appear.—It is,” then he saith, “the tempest of ocean: I will ascend the rock and behold its terrors.”—He climbs the gray rock; but the face of the blue sea is calm: the sun lifts half his face above
the

the eastern hill; his beams glitter, through the warm shower, on the gray beard of the hunter, as he leans forward on his spear, listening to the growing din.—He sees the host of Cuthon. “Shall I not rush,” he says to his soul, “to the aid of Morven?”—Thou needest not, fighter of the wars that are past: thou mayest wait on thy rock till the strife is over; for the warriors of the king are many, going down in their terrible joy.—See! Fergus moves with kindled wrath before them, tall as a ghost of the desert, when he comes shaking the waving heath with his steps. He catches the green groves, as he passes, in his hands, and overturns them in his sport, as the whistling boy lops, with his playful staff, the flowers. In his head is the voice of thunder; his eye is the place of the lightning, and meteors form his waving hair. The nations see it, and tremble.—So moves Fergus. A troubled cloud behind him move his heroes.

THE battle joins. Moruth shakes. The sound of shields, the crash of spears, and the voice of bards, ascend. Whales tremble on their waves. Roes bound towards the desert. Fowls, on their rustling wings, fly over their mountains; or, trembling, fall with fear*. The white-handed daughters of the bow are asleep on their mountain of groves: they hear their noise, as they pass thro’ pines over their booth: their dreams of danger rise; they draw their veil over their head, and tremble for heroes.—Nor is your trembling without cause, white-handed huntresses of Moruth;
many

* The Galic reader will wish to see these lines in their native terror.

Le sgreadail an lanna garbha
'S le caoiribh teine o'n cruaidh arma;
Chuir iad iasg nan cuantaidh stuidhach,

Ann an caoille caola suara.
Chuir iad feidh nam beanntaidh arda
Gus na gleanntaidh fuara fadail;
'S eunlaith bhinn-shoclach nan coillteach,
Anns na speuran le crith-oillte.

many of your heroes are low, and shall no more pursue the deer.— Many rills wander red on Moruth's heath: many a tall tree strews all its branches there. Heroes lie, like groves overturned by the lightning: their green branches shake their sickly heads in all the winds.

Two eagles rush from opposite rocks, and fight on the dark pillar of a cloud between. The blast tosses them from side to side, and the rustling of their wings is heard afar by quaking birds. These eagles are Fergus and Cuthon, in the midst of their strife of steel. Long and terrible is the combat of the chiefs; but neither this nor that prevails. A son of Loda lifts, at length, his spear between. "Why should not," he says, "the hawk of heaven feast on the son of the king?"—Die thou, but not for the hawk, said Fergus, as quick he lifts above him his blasting steel. His head, fixed in the helmet, falls muttering to the earth, and marking, in its way, his own blue shield. The body still had stood, propped by the pitched spear.

FINGAL beheld the danger of his son, and half he drew his sword. But still he stands in his place. "Why should I deprive the young hero of his fame; why should I make the mother of Fergus sad on her cloud?—No; beam of my early love, let not thy face be dark; our son shall yet prevail."

A GHOST of other times is riding by, on his wind. He sees with wonder the terrible strife of the warriors. "They resemble," he says, "the heroes that have been *." He alights from the car of winds. He descends with all his clouds, and stands on the heath
to

* That predilection in favour of former times, so common with old men in this life, is here very naturally ascribed by the poet to a being of another state.

to gaze on the strife of heroes. The ghost, with his mist, hides his son from the king; nor did many of the people see their chief.

FINGAL trembled for his hero. He rushed in all his terrors from his place; like the boar of Gormul, when, wandering on the heath for food, he sees the steps of the hunter towards the place of his young. The rocks hear his voice, and shake with all their branchy trees.—So shook the voice of Fingal the rocks of Moruth; and his bard poured before him, like the roar of a red mountain-stream, the song.—Morven kindled, like the decaying fire, on the heath of Lora, when the spear of the hunter stirs it, and all the winds are awake. It spreads its flames from hill to hill: its columns of dark-curling smoke, with all their thundering noise, ascend. Ghosts sport in its clouds, and pass through the darkness of its flame. The roe hears its sound at a distance. She thinks of her son in his mossy bed. The big tear trickles from her eye. She flies to look for his safety.

THE people of Cuthon fled, or fell. We pursued them over the stream of Moruth. Cuthon himself stood, wounded, in his place, like a rock which the sea hath half-consumed below. The mariner, as he passes, fears its fall, though still it seems to defy the storm.—He saw the coming of the king, and grasped with joy his spear. But Fingal saw his blood, and would not lift the sword. Sullen, after his people, he retired. His steps are slow through Moruth. The furthest bank is steep. Its face he thrice attempts to climb; but thrice in the attempt he fails. He clings by a withered thistle; but it yields.—Backward in the stream the mighty falls!—Moruth sounds along its winding course, like the fall of rocks with their shaggy

thaggy woods, when the thunder rolls above them in clouds, and the valleys, with all their herds, are trembling.

We flew on our spears to assist the chief: but his face was pale, and the darkness of death was gathering about him, a night without moon or stars.

AND art thou fallen, said Fingal with a sigh, art thou fallen, who hast this day been so mighty?—How fleeting is the life of the warrior!—In the morning he goes forth to strew the plain; but his friends receive him a clay-cold corse at night!—His aged mother and spouse of love prepare the feast, around the blazing oak. At times, they listen for his return. The tread of feet is in their ear; the pale moon points out the crowd. “He comes!” they say, as with joy they rush forth.—They meet his bier!—The life of the warrior is a wintry day; short, dark: its streaks of light on the heath are few.—Fergus, bid the friends of Cuthon take him. Bid them also, this night, partake of the feast of Fingal; the deer of their own hills are distant.

CUTHON heard the king, and reached his hand; while a few words trembled on his lips. “Fergus, take thou that shield; Fingal, king of heroes, be thine the rod*. My soul mounts on the meteor’s wing † to the abode of the brave and good. With my

Q q

fathers

* The Druids, and most other pretenders to supernatural power, are said to have worn a white rod, called *Slatan druí achd*, i. e. *the Druid’s rod*, or *magic wand*. The virtues ascribed to this weapon were so great, that we may suppose it would not be forgot in a day of battle. But whether it is this precious wand, or his spear, that Cuthon is here resigning to Fingal, cannot be determined with

certainly, though the first is most probable from the name in the original:

Gabhfa Fhear’ais mo sglia
’S aig Fionn nam fann biodh an t *slat*.

See *Hist. of the Druids*, p. 10.

† Tha m’anams’ air rioluin a triall
Gu ionada fal nam slath.

That souls on their departure from the body take their flight to the other world in such vehicles, is an opinion which still prevails, in some measure, among the

fathers let my body be placed : let our rest be together in the green isle."

WE move to the feast along the heath. We discover through the trees, the steps of age. It was the feeble hunter on the rock ; he who trembled for Morven's heroes. Thrice had he tried to toss the spear on which he leaned, and thrice his sighs arose. He felt the trembling of age on his hand, and saw his locks white with the snow of years, as with them he wiped away the tear that dimmed his sight.—But when the danger of Morven grew, his youth returned, and all the thoughts of feeble age were forgot. He ran to aid them from his rock. He saw, when he came near, the strife was over ; and returned again, low-humming the song, to his wood. The robe of other years, we saw, had failed. His worn-out shield and gray beard, supply along the breast its want. Behind, it is also torn ; but the skin of a boar conceals the rent. —“ Bring,” said the king, “ to the needy this robe ; and bid him come with our people to the feast.” —“ The garment,” he replied, “ the gift of the king, I take ; but cannot wait, this day, for his feast.”

FINGAL knew the voice of Lugal ; he knew the gray dog of his friend. He went with his wonted joy to meet him ; but bade his people stand away, that the aged might not blush.—Chief of Moiallin, he said, where so long hast thou been ? I rejoice to see the friend of my youth. A hundred fair cows, with all their calves, thou gavest me then on Drimcola's heath. Twenty horses also

were

the vulgar Highlanders, who generally believe that certain meteors, to which they give the name of *Dr'eug*, portend the death of eminent persons. This

Druidical notion, with several others, owes its long continuance to the frequent repetition of Ossian's poems.

* The

were thy gift, the children of the rein; and five ships, safe riders of the sea, with all their sails and nodding masts. The like boon, Lugal, shall now be thine. No generous deed shall ever be forgot by Fingal.

I AM not Lugal, the aged replies: I had rather die without a friend to lay me in the narrow house, than take the bounty, due only to him, in his stead*.

—"To thee it is due; and thine shall be the gift. But first thou shalt, for seven days, prolong in Selma the feast. Seven heroes shall then guide thee home. They will remain in Moi-allin to smooth the road before thy aged feet; to ward off every rougher blast that might toss thy gray hairs."

FINGAL led the aged by the hand. We pursued our way with the people of Cuthon, to the feast. A gray stone met us on the heath; and the words of peace were heard from Lugal.

Q. q. z

"WHY

* The attachment of Lugal to his friends was great, when it made him forget all the feebleness of age, and rush down, with the ardour of a youthful warrior, to battle. But his modesty under his reverse of fortune, and the spirit with which he bore his poverty, are more striking features in his character. The generosity and delicacy with which he is treated by Fingal are no less remarkable. *Dan Liughair*, or "the song of Lugal," beginning with

La gan deachaidh Fionn do thigh Le'ir
Bu lionar ann ceir agus fion, &c.

is still a favourite of all admirers of ancient Galic poetry; and is so sure to meet with the approbation of the hearers, that a sentence to that purpose, supposed to have been first spoke by some Culdee, or son of the rock, to whom Ossian repeated

it, is generally added to it.

"Mile beannachd dhuit gach re,
Ossian fheilidh is hionne glair;
Arson aon sgeoil co maith blagh
Sg' dh' airis thu riabh red' bheo."

The modest shyness of Lugal is still highly characteristic of the generality of his countrymen, who wear the best face in the world under the galling load of oppression and the pinching rigours of poverty. With the greatest industry they conceal from all about them how small a *handful of meal is in the barrel*, giving cheerfully away, to the very last, a share of it. And there have been frequent instances of nobody's knowing that the *little oil in the cruise* was spent, till the lamp of life, for want of a supply, was quite extinguished.

* The

"Why," he said, "should they who go together to the feast meet in battle any more? Why should the voice of strife be heard among the race of those who reaped the field together, in the years that are long since past; among the race of those who now ride, hand in hand, upon their clouds; never sad but when they see the war of their sons. Raise this gray stone, the daughter of the rock, on the heath of Moruth. The children of the years to come shall mark it. They will ask the aged warrior what it means. 'Lead me,' he will say, 'to the place.'—With short, equal steps, they walk beside him. The blunt spear supports his hand; and his gray dog, blind with years, attends his steps. The evening is calm. The song of birds is in the woods; the voice of hinds is on the hill; but the aged hears them not. The sun is bright as it goes down. He half-sees the parting beam: its rays are glittering in his few gray hairs. In two white, parted locks, like mine, they hang before him, as he lowly stoops, and wave around the blunted spear.—He hath reached the place; he hath felt, with joy, the stone. 'It is,' he cries, 'the stone of Moruth!—Here,' leaning to it his weary back, he adds, 'here your fathers met in peace: they laid their hands together to rear this gray stone. Forget not, children, the peace of your fathers; remember it when you behold the stone of Moruth *'—Speak, O stone, to the years that

* The custom of setting up such pillars to ratify agreements and to commemorate them, seems to have generally prevailed among ancient nations. We find frequent instances of it in Scripture: (see Gen. 31. 51. and Josh. 24. 26.) The *Ma'arat*, Fauni, Termini, all the Mercurial heaps and pillars among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and those pillars which the old Ethiopians and Arabs held in such veneration, had probably the same origin. The excessive regard paid to these objects, and the custom of calling them to witness their most solemn protestations, led men by degrees to think there resided in them some divinity. The little heaps or mounts called *Si'-dhuin*, or *hills of peace*, so frequent in the Highlands,

that wander beyond the sun, and shall not for ages come forward to hear its morning voice : tell them, and the children who shall behold them, that here we bade the battle cease.—Let the moss of years cover thee, thou sign of peace on Moruth ; let the ghosts of the dead defend thee. Let no unfriendly hand ; no stormy blast, while Moruth's heath shall last, or that dark stream shall run, come nigh thee !”

THE night was spent in the feast. With morning the people of Cuthon retired. The bards raised the mournful song to their chief ; nor were the harps of Morven silent.

CUTHON ! thy arm was mighty, and thy soul of battle great. Often have I seen thee hover, a dark cloud from ocean's mist, above the field of thy fame. But now I see thee not ; though at times I hear thy blast in the gray hair of Moruth's pine. I hear thee, when I sit beneath it, as now, in the gathering of the evening shades, and listen to the murmur of the passing stream.—Sweet is thy nightly song, O stream ; sweet is thy hum in the wandering of thy course.

BUT it is late, and the bard will retire from the storm of night ; for the rustling wing of the heath-cock, lighting on his mossy bed, is heard. Is not that his voice, bidding his mate to haste her home ?—Mate of mine ! Evirallin ! the time hath been when thus I cried, from my booth, to thee. Now I cry ; but there is no friend to answer, save the mimic rock, and the voice of the hollow stream. Fingal is with his fathers. Oscar is no more. Evirallin

is

lands, are still approached with awe, and supposed to be inhabited by *genii*.—They were generally situated on the boundaries between different clans and posses-

sions ; and probably contributed much to maintain among them peace and good neighbourhood.

† In

is in her cloud; and the voice of Malvina is silent*. My fathers, when shall Ossian be with you? My friends, when shall the bard join you? When shall the short days, the long nights of my many-coloured life be over? My friends are gone: their memory, like the stones of their tomb, is half sunk; and the place of their abode is desolate.

BUT such changes are not the lot of the bard alone. Lugar! thou hast had thy share. I have seen the heroes feast in thy hall. Thy lights of wax were many; and plentiful was thy feast of shells. Though a cold, shapeless ruin now, thy palace was then the abode of a king †.—Such have I seen the dwelling of Lugar. But as the warm season, in the rolling of years, is changed; Lugar wandering, with his spouse, in want again was seen.—I passed through Moi-allin's vale ‡: but the house of Lugar was empty.

The

* In the following poem Malvina is a speaker; so that it seems to have been composed before this.

† The whole contrast of this passage is beautiful; but the two lines of which this sentence is a translation are exceedingly striking, as the opposition is so quick, and a group of interesting images are strongly painted in them, with only a single touch.

Ged tha é 'n diugh na sibhifh shuair,
Bha e usir a b' aros Rìgh!

‡ Perhaps there was never any language better adapted for poetry than the Galic, as almost all its words are not only energetical, and descriptive of the objects they represent, but are also, for the most part, an echo to the sense. Harsh ob-

jects are denoted by harsh sounds, in which the consonants greatly predominate; whilst soft and tender objects and passions are expressed by words which bear some analogy to them in sound, and which consist, for the greatest part, of vowels. Hence, in the hand of a skilful poet, the sound varies perpetually with the subject of discourse, and assumes the tone of whatever passion he is at the time inspired with. Any person acquainted with the Galic, will see the justness of this remark, from the different specimens inserted in the course of these notes. It is generally so obvious, that a stranger to the language may observe it, notwithstanding the number of quiescent consonants which oppress the Galic. In p. 244; for instance, the "hoarse-roaring of a wave"

The kid of the roe fed on its green top where inward it fell, in the hall of heroes. The owl, in his window, covered her head with the ivy-branch; and the swallow fluttered around her. The deer cool their sides in the stream before his door; and seem as if they were musing on his lot.—Sons of the mountain, have you seen Lugal? Ah! you are glad, for his shafts will no more disturb you.—But yourselves, like him, shall one day fail. Your companions will look for you in the vale which you used to haunt. Your sons will shake their heads, for they know not where to find you.

VARIOUS, O life, like the seasons of the year, are thy changes! Once, I smiled in the summer of youth; and laughed, like thee, tall pine, at the winter's storm. My leaf like thine, I said, shall always be green, and my branches in age shall flourish. But now my withered arms are bared of all their leaves; and my gray hair, like thine own, is the sport of winds, and trembles in every blast.

TALL

wave on a rock" is described by words which present the letter *r* in almost every syllable:

——— stairich

Mea/g charraige cruaidh a garraich.

And a similar idea is expressed much in the same manner in p. 247:

Gan ruaga le stoirm toirt nualan

Air carraig chruaidh meadhon-barach.

On the contrary, any person who turns his eye to the specimens in p. 145 and 202, where the poet is under the influence of some of the softer feelings, will find the most predominant sounds to be *oi*, *ao*, *aoi*, *eo*, *eo*, and the like.—The original of the passage which gave rise to

this note, is added as a further illustration of the remark. Grief is the predominant passion in it; and *ai*, *iu*, *ua*, *uai*, &c. are the predominant sounds.

A' siubhal gleannan na Mo'aluin

Fhuaras ua shafach tigh Liughair,

Minnein na h earb' air a dhruim uaine,

'Sa suaine finte 's an shardaich aoibhein.

Na uinnaig bha ian na h oi'che,

'S eigheann a' cuir duibhr' air aghaidh,

An gaiothan ga chuartaich; 's na ciar-aighean

Beul a thighe 's an t sruth, fui smuaircin.

A shliochd nan fleibhte, 'm faca sibh Liughar?

Ach 's cubhaidh gur ait leibh nach beo e,

Ach failnichidh sibhse mar eisin,

'S biaidh ar daimhich aon latha gar feornich,

Crathaidh ar clann an cinn le smalan;

Cho'n aithne dhoibh gleann ar co'nuidh!

TALL pine of Moruth, we have once seen better days; but they have fled, on their darkly-silent wing, over the heath to the desert.

THE

THE FALL OF TURA:

A P O E M *.

THE ARGUMENT.

FINGAL, on his return from an excursion which he had made to the Roman province, is received by the congratulatory song of the virgins in his palace of Tura. While they are at the feast, a bard arrives to intreat the aid of Fingal in behalf of Ci-va-dona, whose story is told. In the morning a part set out on this expedition, while the rest pursue the chase, leaving only the women and children at home, with Gara to attend them hard by, in case of any alarm or danger. Unfortunately the house took fire, while they were asleep; and all that were in it perished. This loss is described, and pathetically lamented, by Ossian; and by Malvina, to whom the poem is addressed in the beginning, and who bears a part in the end of it.

WHO comes, pouring his voice on the night? Art thou a ghost that hast not received thy fame? Is thy wandering still on the vapour of the fenny mist; and dost thou come with thy complaint to Ossian's ear?—Pour thy voice, then, son of night! my ear, within its gray lock, leans forward to thy tale. Pour thy voice, ghost of night! that the bard may know thy name.

R r

THE

* This poem is known by the names of *Lofga Taura*, and *Laoidh Ghara's nam ban*, "The burning of Tura," or "The elegy on Gara and the maids of Morven." The unfortunate accident which it records, partly accounts for the sudden de-

cline of the bard's family and friends.—The latter part of the poem is generally repeated as a separate piece, by the title of *Ossian's' coo' hun Fiam*, "The lament of Ossian for his friends."

* Mal.

THE sound comes, growing on the wing of the rolling breeze. It comes, like the sigh of the mountain-stream that falls, between trees, from the height of rocks. It rises from its dark bed, at times, through the mist of foam, and reaches by halves the ear of the hunter. "Lora!" listening from his booth he says, "the voice of thy weary stream is sweet; I love the murmur of thy steps through the rocky vale, though it often foretels the storm."

YES, hunter of roes, the evening voice of Lora is sweet; but sweeter far is that in Ossian's ear. It is soft as the sound of departed bards in the gale of the reed. It is soft and mournful, as the song of Malvina when she sees the ghost of Oscar: the evening is calm, and the breeze scarce waves the down of the lonely thistle.—It is she; it is the love of my Oscar; Malvina, lonely bird*. She comes, like the moon on her solitary mountains, when her steps in clouds are slow, and her face through thin mist is pale. She comes, fair light, to mourn for her sisters' fall. Their place is dark: the mark of their footsteps is lost, as the course of the stars that fell from their blue place in heaven; as the moon when she has retired within her dun robe in the sky.—Yes, Malvina, their place is dark; and the steps of thy grief, on the hill of heath, are lonely.

DAUGHTER of Toscar, bring my harp. Kindle the soul of the bard with thy voice of songs. Awake it from the slumber of years: the night of age is unlovely and dark. It is dark, Malvina; but thy song is a beam of light. Its sound is pleasant, as the harp of spirits

* Malvina, of whom Ossian speaks so often in his poems, was the love of his son Oscar, who died when he was very young. (Temora, B. i.) Ossian always treats her with peculiar tenderness and affection; which she requited, to the very last, with the most dutiful and attentive regard.

* The

spirits on their gale, when they are seen at noon, on their white ridgy mist, creeping along the silent-winding stream. Thy voice is pleasant: join it to the harp: pour it on my ear, through night, Malvina, lonely bird!

THE times that are past roll back, with their dim light, on the fowl of the bard.

WE returned in our fame from the field of Arda *. The steeds of the stranger strode beneath us in their pride; and we rejoiced in the greatness of our spoil. The setting sun was yellow on the groves of the mountain; its beams on Tura were like the gold of the stranger. The face of the lake below is calm. The children admire the hills that hang beneath it, with their ivy-rocks in the midst of woods. They wonder to see the blue smoke of Tura, there, descend. The virgins of Morven stand, like rainbows, upon their mountain. They see the steps of our return; and in the joy of beauty they move to meet us. The sound of their hundred harps is up. The songs of music, mixed with these, arise.

“WHO comes,” they said, “in the light of his strength; who comes gleaming in his steel? The steed of the stranger is proud beneath him: he paws with scorn the earth, and tosses on high his gray mane. The clouds of smoke, like the blue curling pillars that rise from Tura, fly, snorting, from his nostrils; and from his mouth hangs the foam of the stream. His neck bends on high, like the bow of the battle; and his two eyes are flames.—Who holds the glittering reins of the steed? who but Fingal, king of men?—Thy fame, O Fingal, is brighter around thee than sun-beams; in

R r 2

its

* The most of this paragraph, with have been supplied from the tales, as the some others that follow, particularly before and after the song of the old bard, versification is broken and defective.

* The

its light thy thousands rejoice. The smile of peace is on their brow: they are calm as the smooth lake. They are as the giver of Cona in the evening of spring, when the children of the stream leap in air for the buzzing wing.—But they that are calm in peace, were a tempest in the strife of war. Before them, strangers of the distant land! you have fled: in their presence, kings of the world! you have trembled. Your warriors, without their steeds and bright arms, return. ‘Where,’ you say, ‘have you left your arms?’—Ask the sons of the mountain, they best can tell. Your own men are silent; they are ashamed: no bard gives their name to the song; no virgin comes, with her harp, to meet them. No; they weep in their secret halls, for their lovers have given their fame to Fingal. Yes, virgins of the distant land, you may weep: kings of the world, you may tremble. But Morven’s maids will rejoice; with the voice of songs and the harp they will hail their heroes †.”

SUCH was the song of Morven’s maids in the day of their joy; when the gladness of their face was like setting sun-beams on the mountain of groves, and their peace like the green leaf of the oak, when it hangs, unshaken, over Lubar. Nor did your harps sleep that

† The religion, laws, and customs of the Caledonians, had all a tendency to inculcate their grand maxim of *behaving valiantly in war*. Such especially was the tendency of these congratulatory songs of their fair ones when they returned in triumph. With the same view of animating them to a gallant behaviour, the ladies often followed them to the field of action, where they were sometimes more than mere spectators. In the passage cited

in the *Note*, p. 300, concerning the death of Oscar, there are, in almost all the editions I have met with of that piece, two lines (there marked in *Italics*) which intimate that their women were then present. The practice of other ancient and neighbouring nations gives a further probability to this custom, so different from the manners of modern times. See Lord Kaim’s *Sketches*, B. i. Sk. 7.

* Hof-

that night, O bards, on the walls of echoing Tura. Their joyful, trembling voice is up. Their sound at a distance is heard. The red oak is in a blaze; the spire of its flame is high. The traveller sees its light on the dusky heath, as night spreads around him her raven wings. He sees it, and is glad; for he knows the hall of the king. 'There,' he says to his companion, 'we pass the night. The door of Fingal is always open. The name of his hall is, The stranger's home *.'

THE feast is spread. The king wonders that no stranger from the darkly heath is come. "I will listen," he says, "if I may hear their wandering steps." He goes. An aged bard meets him at the door. On less than half a spear he leans his bending weight. No steel glitters on his blunt spear: for the days of his strife are past; his battles are all fought, and their noise is over.

THE king, with joy, led the stranger in. We saw his grief-red eye bedimmed with tears: we saw their path on his furrowed cheek. His few gray hairs hang, a thin, twisted lock on either side, and mingle with the white beard on his breast. A youth stands behind him: his down-cast face is the bed of grief: he bears the harp of the bard.

WE rise to give the strangers place. We bid them partake of our feast that smokes around. We bid the light of our joy dif-

* Hospitality is one of those virtues which lose ground in proportion as civilization advances. It still subsists to a high degree in the Highlands; though vanishing so fast, that, in some years hence, its existence in some parts may be as much doubted as that of some other virtues ascribed by Ossian to his heroes. It is not

many years since it was the general practice to look out every evening, whether any stranger appeared, before the doors were shut. When any had cast up, the host had manifestly more pleasure in giving, than the guest in receiving, the entertainment.

Sed tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.

* Si-

dispel their cloud of grief, and shine through the mist on their soul. But they were like the gray cloud of the morning, which climbs not half the mountain, though the sun in his brightness shines around.

THE aged, at length, took his harp, and poured in our listening ear his song.

“SITHAMA was a chief of other lands. His halls lifted their heads on Gormluba’s banks, and saw their gray towers in its blue winding stream. Mountains spread their arms around the place, and aged woods defend it from the storm. Here, fifty times, the oak dropt its withered leaf on Sithama’s head; and as oft badé he the people mark how fast their days decline. ‘We, wither,’ he would say, ‘as the grass of the mountain; we fade as the leaf of the oak. Four are the seasons of life, and restless they roll as those of the year. Some fall in youth, as the bud that is killed by the blast: others are like the leaf over which the mildew hath passed in the fultry day. Many fall, like my departed love, in the sickly autumn; and a few remain, like myself, till the winter of age. Since our season then is so uncertain, let us be renowned, he would say, while we may*.’

“The deer of his own hills sufficed Sithama: he sought not to drink, save of his own blue stream. When the feeble sought his help,

* Sithama seems to have been of the sect of the Druids. His parabolical manner of conveying instruction is agreeable to the most ancient times, and to those ænigmatical apophthegms which Laërtius ascribes particularly to the Druids. If the whole of this order were obnoxious to Fingal, their confidence of his readiness to redress the wrongs done even to one of them, and the alacrity with which he undertook it, reflect the greatest honour on his character. The highest heroism is to be above revenge, and to subdue one’s enemies by kindness.

help, his blade leapt out of its dark sheath, and shone in their aid. The helpless staid behind his shield, and said, Here we are safe.

“ The strife of friends arose. Duarma seeks the fall of his brother. The injured obtains Sithama’s aid. But the gloomy Duarma prevails. Talmo falls in blood ; and Sithama, the friend of the feeble, fails !—Duarma comes to Gormluba’s streams. The son of Sithama is young. He admires the boss of the broad shield on the wall, and asks how the spear of battle is lifted. Over the heath he sees the strangers come, as night descends upon the grove. Short, but fast, are his steps to meet them : for Crigal had the soul of his father ; he rejoiced in the presence of the stranger, as the green branch in the shower of the spring. He sees the face of Duarma dark ; but he reaches his little hand. ‘ The feast,’ he says, ‘ is spread ; why should thy face be mournful ? ’ Duarma makes no reply ; but his spear on high is lifted. The youth attempts to fly ; but alas ! he flies in vain. Across the threshold of his father he is stretched. His soul comes, red, through the path of the spear.—His sister, from her window, sees Duarma’s wrath. What shall the helpless Civa-dona do ?—‘ Aged bard, canst thou not help me ? ’—The withered arm of the bard is propped by half a spear.—She wildly turns her to the other side. The window is there, from which virgins oft beheld their face of beauty in the flood. From its height she throws herself into Gormluba’s stream. The bard with his harp goes, trembling, to the door. His steps are like the warrior of many years, when he bears, mournful, to the tomb the son of his son. The threshold is slippery with Crigal’s wandering blood ; across it the aged falls. The spear of Duarma over him is lifted ;

lifted ; but the dying Crigal tells, ' It is the bard *.'—A gray dog comes howling by, and in his side receives the spear.—The hall is on fire. Its flames are moon-beams in the vale. The bard seeks Civa-dona with their light, and finds her clung to a branch that wandered across the stream. Crigal is laid in his silent bed, and Civa-dona is clad in his robes. She goes with the bard to seek for aid.—King of Morven, the unhappy two are before thee ; give the young and the old thine aid."

THE bard ceased. The burst of his grief arose. With the virgin-sisters of Morven Civa-dona retired. She retired, like a star behind its cloud, after its watery face hath sparkled a little through the storm. In her brother's robe, where it veiled her head, we saw the marks of Duarma's spear.

THE tear starts into the eye of the king. With his gray lock he wipes it off. His heroes forget the feast. " Reach me," said Frefdal, " my spear."

" THE day lifts above the hill his gray head †. Our course shall be to Ardven's chafe. Ten heroes shall visit thence Duarma's hall : and the youth who wins her love, shall remain with Civa-dona."

WE flew, light as ghosts when they retire from day. Gara alone remains at Tura ; that no wandering foe may alarm our maids.—Daughter of Toscar, why that burst of grief ? Their hall is the house of joy yet. Dry, then, Malvina, thy tears, and give the rest of the tale to the song.—The song of grief is a stream, O Malvina ! It melts the soul of the mighty, and carries it along in its darkly course. Its murmur, though sad, is pleasant.

DOST

* The character and person of the bard were always held sacred even by the most unsparing cruelty.

† Fingal speaks.

Dost thou not remember, Malvina, the beauty of the stranger, when the brightness of the day arose, and the sun shone on the heathy hill? Yes; for thou didst attend her, on thy steed to Ardven, and then pursue the chase with the king. It was then we beheld the beauty of Civa-dona, when thou didst retire, like the moon, behind thy mountains. She shone, like a bright star over the broken edge of a cloud; but who could admire that star, when the full unclouded moon was seen?—Yet the star of Gormluba was fair.—White were the rows within her lips*; and like the

S f

down

* The poet carries the description of this lady to an unusual length, either to divert, for a little, Malvina's grief; or to pay the greatest compliment he could to her beauty, by giving such a portrait of one whom he allows her to have so far excelled. The original is beautiful; but has had the misfortune to be considered as only ideal; inasmuch that it has got the name of *Aisling air dhreach mnai*, or "The vision of the beautiful woman." Such as think it a trespass, will, it is hoped, forgive the inserting it here, for the sake of its admirers.

Innseam pairt do dhreach na reul :
 Bu gheal a deud, gu h-èir dlu.
 'S mar chànach an t fleibhè,
 Bha a cneas fa h eide' ur.
 Bha a braighe cearclach ban.
 Mar sheachda tla 's an shireach,
 Bha da chich air a h uchd ciar'ach :
 Bè'n dreach fud miann gach fir.
 Bu shòithe' binn a ghoir,
 Shu deirge nan ros a beul.
 Mar chobhar fios ra taobh
 Sinnte gu caol bha 'lamh.
 Bha 'da chaol-mhala mhine,
 Du'-dhonn air liobh an loin.
 A da ghruaidh air dhreach nan caoran,
 'Si gu hiomlan fear o chron.

Bha a gnùis mar bhàra-ghcuga
 Anns a cheud-shas ur.
 A folt buidhe mar orra-shleibhte;
 Smar dhearfà greine a fuil,

A later poet has been so struck with this description, that, on hearing it, he naturally expressed his desire of being made happy by such a beauty; "for whose love he would render more than love; for whose regard he would render more than regard; and always maintain an affection, which in the longest revolution of days and nights, he promised, should neither decay nor abate."—As these lines are in the same measure with the description of the lady, they are generally repeated along with it, as if they had been originally joined to it.

'S truagh nach mise am fear,
 Annir nan rosg mall,
 D'an tiubhra tusa gradh
 Is bheirinn a dha da chionn.
 Bheirinn gaol thar ghaol,
 Bheirinn gradh thar ghradh;
 Bheirinn run thar run,
 Is mein thar mein a ghna;
 'S nam biodh do chroidhe neo'shuar,
 Gun ghluasad as a chaoidh',
 Bheirinnse dhuit gradh
 Nach crionadh a la na dh'oidhech,

down of the mountain, under her new robe was her skin. Circle on circle formed her fairest neck. Like hills, beneath their soft snowy fleeces, rose her two breasts of love. The melody of music was in her voice. The rose, beside her lip, was not red; nor white, beside her hand, the foam of streams.—Maid of Gormluba, who can describe thy beauty! Thy eye-brows, mild and narrow, were of a darkish hue; thy cheeks were like the red berry of the mountain ash. Around them were scattered the blossoming flowers on the bough of the spring.—The yellow hair of Civa-dona was like the gilded top of a mountain, when golden clouds look down upon its green head, after the sun has retired. Her eyes were bright as sun-beams; and altogether perfect was the form of the fair.—Heroes beheld, and blessed her.

WE reached the hall of Duarma; but he was fled: he had heard of the fame of Morven. The elbow of his father leaned on a gray stone, as he lay along it on earth. His head hangs down on his hand; and his gray beard is strewed in dust. His sighs are deep on the wind; and his dim, tearful eye is red. He hears the rustling of our feet near Talmo's tomb.—“My son, my son,” he cries, “it is pleasant to be so nigh the tread of thy ghost!”—We felt for the aged; we left him a part of the spoil.

WE reached the place where Sithama dwelt: but it was dark and desolate. The fox started from its ruins; and the owl rested in the cleft of its broken wall. We looked for the window from which the fair had escaped; but it was fallen. The white stream leapt, roaring, over its heap of stones. We saw where the threshold had been marked with Crigal's blood. It had rested in the hollow that was worn in the stone by the frequent foot of guests.—Civa-dona
was

was sad ; but we left Frefdal to cheer her : it was he who had won her love.

FINGAL still waits us on Ardven. There we partake of his feast of deer.---Night comes : sleep descends : ghosts rise with all their mournful forms in our dreams. The harps of their bards are like the song of the tomb ; their sound comes to our ear like the mountain-sigh, when it is heard from afar before the storm. Over us, in dark shapeless mist, they hang. The blast in frequent eddies comes : it rolls before it all their limbs. But still the forms return. They bend over us, leaning from the breast of their cloud ; and often they heave the sigh.

THE sleep of the king was fled. Thrice had the faint howlings of ghosts awaked him. He ascends the hill to hear their words. He looks about him from the height. He sees the curling pillars of smoke ascend to the stars : he sees the spiry flames lift their dark-red head on high, above his hall. His shield is struck : his voice is up. "Tura flames through heaven !"

WITH the thunder we start, at once, awake. We fly like lightning over the heath of Colra. Its dark stream meets us in the vale. Each bounds over it, on his spear, with speed. The son of Ratho tumbles from the height of his. "Heed me not," he cried ; "but fly : fly fast, and save my love."—In the current, twice he lifts his white eye above the stream : but, the third time, he sinks and dies.

WE came to Tura ; but it was too late. The flames were hiding, in dark-red ashes, their head : the ruin falls, in heaps, above the dying coals. The door, half-burnt, is still shut ; as the daughters of Morven left it, when they had retired to rest, in the midst

of their joy. O why did they not find the way to it, when the flame of the kindled heath awoke them!—No morning, with its calm voice, shall ever dispel your slumbers, daughters of the mountains! The voice of the lover, no more, shall say “Awake.”

WE turn to the ruin our back. We bend, in sadness, over our spears; and loudly bewail our loss.—Our hundred helmets, and our hundred bossy shields; our coats of mail, and swords of light; our hundred hounds, the young children of the chase; our fluted reins, the rulers of proud steeds; and all our banners, red-green meteors that streamed in air;—all these, were, that day, forgot; no hero remembered they were in the hall.—The burst of our grief was for our hundred fair, and for their little sons; that young grove of trees, growing in their robes of green, in the showery sun-beams of the spring.—They were young trees; but the flame caught their green heads, and laid their beauty, amidst ashes, low.—Malvina, fair light! it is not without cause thou art sad; for all the bright beams that attended thy course are extinguished. One mournful grave contains the remains of thy sisters.

WE stood all day, like the dark stream which the ice hath bound in its course on the mountain of cold.—The darkness of night would return unperceived, if a voice had not awaked us from our grief.—It is the burst of the voice of Gara. We look for him in the tower where he had rested; but he is not there. His voice ascends from a cave. The sad mourner there is stretched in grief.—In the troubled dreams of his rest, the crackling flames had assailed his ear; he thought the foot of the foe approached. With a louder crash the roof falls in. The shield of the king, he thinks,

thinks, is struck: At once he starts awake. His hair had been caught in the opening end of the beam on which he slept: he leaves it there, with all its skin. He sees Tura low: he knows not that his blood, a red stream, descends. His pain, amidst his grief, is forgot. "Virgins of my love, I will not survive you," he said as, expiring, he fell on the heath*.

NOR didst thou die alone, O Gara: the days of many other heroes, in their darkly-silent heath, were few and mournful. They pined away like green leaves over which the mildew hath passed: they sink in silence amidst the mossy heath of the hill. Like ghosts that have not received their fame, they shunned the voice of joy†. They retired to their caves when rose the sound of gladness.

MAL-

* The *ur-fgeuls* give a different account of the death of Gara, and relate several strange stories concerning him, such as his having been beheaded on the thigh of Fingal, &c. but these tales are manifestly late and spurious, and therefore rejected.

† The melancholy state allotted, after death, for such as had not "received their fame," must have strongly excited those who believed it, to distinguish themselves by such brave and virtuous actions as might merit the praise of the bard. We justly laugh at many of the superstitions of our forefathers: but as, in the progress of all states, such a period must be, we have also reason to admire the wisdom with which the Druids managed this engine, so as to make it generally subservient to the interests of society.—The superstructures of superstition, like very old towers, appear now odd and fantastic, as well as extremely

incommodious; but they were useful in their own day, and most of them well adapted to the necessity of the times.

The first Christian missionaries, in these countries, were so sensible of the advantage to be derived from some of these superstitions, among men who were not yet ripe for bearing the clear light of truth, that they did not so much attempt to stop their source, as to turn them into a new channel. With them, for instance, whoever was not initiated into the Christian religion by baptism, was forced to wander after death, a mournful solitary shade, in the same state as formerly those who had not "received their fame." It was a notion in the Highlands till of very late, that the faint voices of children who had died unbaptized were heard in the woods, and other lonely places, bemoaning their hard fate.—All countries, as well as this, had once their superstitious æras; only they are the happiest, which have got the soonest through them.

MALVINA †! my cause of grief is great. Thou hast lost thy sisters, fair lights upon the mountains; but I survive the race of heroes. I search for them with my hands among the silent streams which they used to haunt; but their tomb is all I find. Alas! the children of the years to come shall not perceive even this; they will seek it on the mountains, but shall not find it.—The chief of the days that shall be, will stand on the green hill where Tura was. Cona rolls below him in its pebbly bed. Its stream wanders, losing its way, through woods; herds, along its banks, are seen to stray. Blue Ocean trembles at a distance. Isles lift their green, frequent heads, above its wave; and the bounding mariner is sailing towards the coast.—“This spot,” the chief will say, “is lovely: here raise for me, in view of whales and roes, the lofty house.”—They dig the green mound; the mound where Tura rose. Spears, half-burnt, lift before them their heads; broken shields, amidst ashes, begin to appear. “It is the tomb of heroes,” he will say; “shut again the narrow house.” He calls the gray-haired bard, and asks whose memory is contained in the tomb. The bard looks around for the light of the song: but his soul of age is dark; his memory has failed. He looks for his companions; but he sees their tomb. He stands, perhaps, a solitary tree like Ossian.—A solitary tree am I,

† What follows of this poem is generally repeated by itself under the title of *Ossian a' casidh nam Fionn*; but as it seems to have been originally a part of *Leisge Taura*, it is here restored to it. The great number of names, towards the end of it, occasions such a difference in the recitation of that part, as made it impossible

to determine the true list with any degree of certainty. The catalogue of names, when repeated by itself, begins generally with these lines:

So far am fac' mi n Fhiann,
Chunacas ann Cian agus Conu,
Fionn fein is Oscar mo mhac,
Baoim' Art is Diarmid donn.

I, O bard, on the lone mountains; its companions, one by one,
have forsook it: drooping, it mourns their departure.

MALVINA.

AND are not the sisters of Malvina, likewise, green trees that have
failed? Yes; and no young plant, in their room, is growing.
The virgins are no more, and my cause of woe is great. In the day
I look for them; but no trace of their steps is to be found, save
the green tomb with all its stones of moss. In the season of night I
mourn for them; but they are lights that have retired from their
blue place in the heavens. I am like the gray star of the morning,
when, sickly and pale, it mourns behind its companions. It mourns
for a little, but its own light will soon grow dim. The huntress,
rising on the heath, shall look up; but shall not see it. "We too,"
she says to her companion, "one day shall fail."

OSSIAN.

THE heart of Ossian is sunk in the night of his grief. It is like
the sun in his dark-crufted cloud: no ray of light bursts through
the gloom: no smile alights on the mountain-top; the silent val-
ley, around its dark stream, is mournful.—The heroes have with-
drawn their light, which shone, like the brightness of my arms,
around me.

MALVINA.

THE lights around Malvina have also failed. My heart is like
the moon when her darkness grows. I draw, like her, my veil over
my face, and lament my sisters in secret. Yes; fair lights, I will
not forget you, though you have hid yourselves in darkness: your
memory is mournfully-pleasant.

Os-

OSSIAN.

NOR can I forget you, rulers of the storm of battle, though you now rest in your peaceful slumbers. Your image still dwells in my soul, though I shall see you no more, as once I have done, on the brown heath.—Here have I seen Fingal, king of men; Oscar and Ryno, beams of light; Artho of beauty, and the dark-brown hair of Dermid. Here have I seen the son of Lutha, the meek; and that soul without guile, Conchana; with the son of Garo the bold, the three Finans, and Fed. Here burnished the helmet of Eth; here whistled in winds the dark locks of Dairo; and here streamed, like banners, the red hair of Dargo. Here Trenar grew like an oak; Torman roared like a stream; Ardan stalked in his pride, like a tree lifting its green head above the valley of mist; Murno and Sivellan, beside him, smiled over blue shields. Clessamor of mighty deeds was here; and here the polished steel of Fercuth. Here arose the voice of Carril; and here thousands listened to the harp of Ullin. Here have I seen Moran and Fithil of songs; Connal of soft words and generous deeds; Lamdarga with his spear of blood; and Curach, whose arm was an host in the hour of danger.—And where art thou, Lugar, whose door was never shut; where is now thy voice, Fadetha of the loudest cry? where, Ronuro, are thy golden locks? where, Colda, are thy feet of deer? and where, Lumna, thy spear of battle? Where is mildly-looking Ledan; with Branno of arms, and Toscar of youth? Where are the hunters of the boar on Gormal, Machrutha, Colmar, and Comalo; Fillan, my brother of love, and ruddy Fergus of the mildest speech? Where is Crugal, blazing in his steel; and Dogrena, the light of heroes on the plain? Where, Aldo, is now thy beauty? and where,
Ma-

Maronnan, the strength of thy blue shells? Who will shew me the steps of Duchomar, the black but comely; or the face of Crigal, beam of love? Suino, Sorglan, and Conloch, have also failed; the three mountain-streams in our battles. Connal, the meteor of death, is no more; nor Gaul, the whirlwind by which our foes were scattered.—Heroes of my love, you have failed; none of you remains to shed the tear on the tomb of Ossian. No friend shall raise my gray stone, or prepare, on the lonely heath, my narrow bed. No; the heroes of Morven have all failed. But their memory shall dwell in the soul of the bard.

MALVINA.

SISTERS of my love, you have also failed: but in the soul of Malvina you still remain. My departing breath shall be a song in your praise.—Yes, Evirchoma, Darthula, Sulmina, I feel your warm beams pass often over my soul. They are like sun-beams of autumn, when they fly over the dark-brown heath of Lena; and the watery bow, with all its tears, is nigh.—Gellama, Moina, Minona! you once shone on these hills, though dim is now your beauty, Melikoma, Colmal, and Annair, did your form of comeliness continue! or are you, in your thin clouds, still admired by heroes? Crimora, has thy beauty lasted! Gelchoffa, where are the steps of thy loveliness?—Derfagrena, what is now become of all thy brightness? and where, Gi-thona, dost thou pour thy voice of love? Like the harp of the bard, when the chief of the people is dead, it was sweetly-mournful.—And, why should you be forgot, Evirallin and Clatho, fairest of all the lights that have shone on Morven! Joy is a stranger in Selma, since you have set in darkness: the songs of virgins ever since have ceased; and the harps of the bards

T t

are

are silent.—But the tears and the voice of Malvina would fail.—Fair beams ! you have left your sister mournful.—Dimly she shines upon the solitary mountains, and her steps are lonely. Pale and sickly is her countenance, as the face of the moon when it appears in heaven, a gray cloud, in the season of the sun, after all the stars of its course have retired.—Sisters of my love ! you are stars that have failed ; but your memory is still with Malvina.

OSSIAN.

* CEASE, Malvina, from thy tears. Thou makest the aged sad. As the night on her wings is almost past, so the night of our grief will soon be over. It is like the dream of the huntress of the roe, in the cleft of her rock. In thought she falls from the height of hills : she alights in the stream below : her soul, like the white-breasted bird of the stream, is now above, and now beneath the flood. She cries to her love, but he cannot come nigh her : her soul flies on clouds : she sees him behind her, mournful at the tomb of her rest. She longs for his coming, for she is sad.—Her own sigh awakes her : she lifts her head beneath her rock ; and the dream of her terror is over.—Such a dream is our life, hunt-
ress

* In this place there is sometimes repeated a passage which seems rather to have been the opening of some other poem than any part of this. As it is tender and beautiful, I shall here give the translation of it.

Oss. Why flow thy tears like the stream of the fountain ; why sighs thy voice like the gale of Lego ?

MALV. Dost thou ask the cause of my grief, when the thistle grows in Selma, and the bats dwell in the house of Fingal ? I listened to a noise in the blast ; but it was not Cuthullin's car : I saw a beam

of light on Lena ; but it was not the spear of Oscar.—Oscar ! thy spear is a dweller of the tomb, and thy shield is become dim in Selma ? I saw its boss ; but it was covered with mist, and its many thongs had failed.

Oss. Love of my Oscar ! we too shall fail, and Selma itself in its green tomb shall moulder.—But the slumbers of the tomb are sweet, O Malvina ! let not thy soul grieve for those who dwelt in Morven. They have been beams that shone in heaven for a season, and their path was marked with day.—

refs of woody Cona. Our friends, before us, shall soon awake us. In the voice of the reedy gale, dost thou not already hear them say, "Malvina and Offian are soon to join us."—Malvina! their sound to me is pleasant. It is like the murmur of Lora to the traveller of night, when he comes, wandering, over the desert. His face is towards Selma; but it is hid in darkness. No light but the stormy meteor is seen on the heath. The narrow-winding path on the brow of the mountain is lost; and the shriek of ghosts is heard around. At length he hears the voice of Lora, leaping from its broken rocks. His joy returns. "Selma," he says, "is nigh!"—Such * is the joy of Offian wandering in dark-

T t 2 ness,

* This passage and one or two more of the same kind, seem to rise somewhat higher in sentiment than the general strain of these poems. As this, in the opinion of many, may render their antiquity more doubtful, I have here inserted the original, in order to give such as understand it a fair opportunity of judging for themselves. Some of the lines, it is possible, may have been altered or interpolated; but as the most of them, from their antiquated air and obsolete expression, are manifestly old, I was loth to reject any of them upon a mere suspicion. Passages of this nature assume a very different look in a translation from what they have in the original, as they must be stripped of their ancient garb, and dressed out in those expressions that are appropriated by modern composition. Besides, as all metaphors do not run equally well in all languages, nor the same images tally in one tongue so well as in another, several alterations must be made in order to give the style an uniform look. Some small variations, on this account, have been made in the passage

before us; particularly, the words rendered "the light of our joy shall not be darkened," are in the original "the light of our joy shall gleam as the blade of Luno." The genius of the English language requires frequently a little softening of those images which appear natural and unaffected in the Galic.

'Sco ait is sin Offian anrach
 Ri claidin cagar nan taibhsé
 Ga chuirre' gu talla a shinnfir,
 Aite-co'ail nan caomh air iontrain.
 Ann talla nam slath am bi brón,
 Ne faoi le deoir air a ghruaidh,
 An t athair an caoi' an t Oscar,
 Sam mair osnai' Mala-mine?
 An spionar Aoibhir-aluin o Gradh,
 No'n loigear aros nam Fiann;
 An sgarar na cairdean o cheile,
 No'n dealuigh an t eug gach dialis?
 A reul na maife! ni h amhluidh,
 Ach dealruidh mar lann an Luin ar follus;
 Arn aoibhneas mar an shairge cha traigh
 Scho'n shailnich mar aghaidh na Geltaich.
 Ar caoimh mar sholluis a chaochail
 'Sna speura faoin os ar cionn
 Cha bbi nis mo; ach taomaidh
 Le ceol aobhach an aiteal tharuinn.
 —Inghean Thefair, uiscag at aonag
 Leig air faondra mata do thuirse.

ness, when a voice tells him, that, soon, he will reach his fathers. —Malvina, shall we not then meet the friends for whom we mourn; and, in their converse, again rejoice?—Shall there be any grief dwelling in the clouds; shall there be any mourner there? —Shall the father, in that place, lose his Oscar; or Malvina mourn over the tomb of her love?—Shall Eirallin, there, be torn from her Ossian; the hall, like Tura, be burnt; or the friends by death be divided?—No; fair beam! the light of our gladness shall not be darkened: our joy no more shall waste as the moon, nor shrink as the sea, and retire. Our friends, no more, shall be stars that forsake their blue place, and leave their companions mournful. No: they will always attend us in the joy of our course; they will pour their light and their glad song around us. —Give, then, thy tears to the wind, daughter of Toscar! cease from thy grief, Malvina, lonely bird!

CATHLAVA:

CATHLAVA*:

A P O E M.

THE ARGUMENT.

RONNAN having sent his scout to assist Sulmina in her escape from her father's house, looks for her in vain all night. In the morning he consults an old Druid, from whom he learns that she had been intercepted and carried off by Lava, to whom her father had formerly promised her in marriage. Ronnan, with his followers, pursues Lava, and lands in the night upon his coast, where he meets with an old man, to whom he had early owed his life, and to whom he makes himself known after he had heard his story. Next morning, the two parties having engaged, Lava is slain; and Sulmina, who out of concern for Ronnan had come to the field in disguise, is found there, after the battle, mortally wounded. Ronnan, having established his old friend Runma in Lava's possessions, returns home; carrying with him the body of Sulmina. The poem is addressed to the son of Arar, who appears to have been a young bard.

THOU fittest by thine own blue stream, son of Arar; thy harp lies silent by thy side: why dost thou not praise the departed? Around thee, they hover on clouds, dark-bending over the place of their rest. But no voice is heard, save that of the rustling breeze, and murmuring brook. Why so silent, son of Arar? Dost thou not know the sons of fame are around thee?

“THOU knowest the fame of the departed, Orran†! the deeds
of

* *Cathlava*, “the battle of Lava.” This poem is sometimes called *Dan an fhir leidh*, “the song of the gray man,” from the appearance made in it by an aged Druid.

† Since the order of the bards has ceased, almost all the ancient Galic poems are ascribed to Ossian. To the most, and best of them, he is justly entitled; but as this seems to be only an imitation of his manner

of other times are funbeams around thy soul. Take then the harp, and let the bard of youth hear the song, that he may pour its light on future times. So shall their names be not forgot on their hills when thy harp is hung in thy silent hall ; when thy voice of music is ceased, like the gale when it sleeps in the trees, in the calm evening of autumn."

My voice indeed shall cease, and my harp ere long be silent ; but their fame shall not be forgotten. Thou mayest listen to their praise, son of Arar, and leave it to the bards of the years to come.

ON these hills lived Dumor of spears ; his daughter of beauty moved graceful on his hills. Her harp was the joy of his hall. Lava saw the maid, and loved her. His arm was strong in the wars of Dumor, who promised him the fair Sulmina. But the maid refused her love, and gave her soul to Ronnan ;—Ronnan of the fair hair and mildest look, whose dwelling stood by the stream of Struthorman. He heard of Sulmina's grief, and sent his scout to bring her to his hills.

SHE went with the son of night : but Lava met her on the heath : An oak and a thousand thongs confine the scout : a dark-wombed ship receives the maid. Loud were her cries, as they bounded over the ridgy deep : " Ronnan, relieve me ; O Ronnan, relieve thy love !"

BUT he hears thee not, hapless maid ! By the side of a stream he sits, thinking thou dost come.

" What detains thee, Sulmina, so long ? What keeps my love from the stream of her promise ? I listen, but hear not the soft tread

manner, the name of Orran is here retained, though that of Ossian is no less frequently used by those who repeat it.

Co b' shearr fios na thn fein,
Ossian, air beus na dh'fhalbh ? &c.

tread of thy foot; it is but the breeze, rustling in the aged tree of Senar. Come, my love, like the roe to meet her companion: why are thy steps so slow on the heath of Gormul?

THE night is long without my love. Why stand ye still, ye travellers of the blue sky? Have you forgot to run your course; or are you, like me, waiting for your loves?—Sun of the morning, why dost thou forget to rise; why dost thou sleep so long in thy eastern chambers?—I know it; thou hast met with thy Sulmina; for I see not her steps in the heavens. Yes, you are together, fair lights! with your children, the lesser beams, in their green, trembling beauty, around you. In your chambers of clouds, you are together, and there the night is short. But, here, it is long; for the blue eye of Sulmina is absent.—Lift thy yellow head from thy eastern cloud, son of the morning! Shine on the path of Sulmina, O sun! and bring her to the hill of her promise.

THE gray-dark morning comes. The sun shines; but it brings not his beloved. He sees a cloud rise before him. It assumes the form of Sulmina. His arms are spread; he flies to grasp the shape. But a blast, dark-rushing from the mountain, comes. Its path is through the form of Sulmina.

RONNAN feared the sign. He went to the aged Senar*. Under

* *Sean'ar*, "the man of age." He appears to have been a Druid, living in his grove of oaks. His appearance is in the original so awful and striking, that the poem, as already observed, takes frequently its name from it.

An crith-thaice ri luirg fein,
Ful' gheig dhoilleir dharaich,
Lan oghuidheachd:— a' crom-aomadh,
'S sheafag aoida fios mu bhrollach.

—Air lar tha fhuil a' deareadh,
Ach anam ann co 'radh thaibhse.

The reply of this oracle is clear and laconic,

Macan ann fas cruaidh,
Barca, thar cuan, na deann;
Shuilmhine! 'scruidh leam do ghlaodh,
A 'taomadh air tuinn gun sburtachd!

It was from this pretension of the Druids to supernatural knowledge, and from the many

der the awful shade of his oak he finds him, leaning on his own trembling staff. His head of age stoops to the ground; his gray beard hangs down on his breast, and his dim eyes are fixed on earth. But his soul is mixed with the spirits of air, and his converse is with ghosts.

WHAT see'st thou of my love, said Ronnan; what see'st thou of Sulmina?

I SEE, said the aged, a youth tied to an oak: a vessel rides the wave. Sulmina pours her voice on the sea; loud are the shrieks of the helpless.

SAD is thy tale to me, said Ronnan.—Thou hast not heard its sadness all, said Senar.

MOORNFUL the chief retires. With his spear he strikes the gathering bos. A hundred youths hear the sound, and start, amidst roes, from their beds of heath. We poured from all our hills to the stream of the chief. We passed the night in silence, for great was the grief of Ronnan. The voice of no harp was heard; the sound of no shell went round; no feast was spread; no oak gave its glimmering light, on that night, on the heath of Strutherman. Cold, drooping, and dark we sat, till day arose in the east. With morning we rush to the deep; and virgins, with grief, behold from behind their rocks our flying sails.

BUT what are thy thoughts in the morning, Dumor; when no daughter of beauty looks, blue-eyed between her yellow locks, within thy darkened hall?—The daughters of the bow conveyed on the dew of the dawn. They moved forth to the chase, like
fun-

many passages of this kind in the ancient *cond-sight*, which so long prevailed in the Gaelic poetry, that the notion of the *fe-* Highlands, took its origin.

sun-beams on the hill of the east. They came to the secret hall of Sulmina, but it was silent. " Daughter of Dumor, art thou not yet awake? Thou didst not use to be the last on the hill of roes. Awake; arise: the sun is coming forth; and the stag, rising in his bed of moss, is stretching all his limbs. Daughter of Dumor, lift thy locks; this day we move forth to the chase of roes.—But ah! she is not here!"---Their sighs, like the shrill voice of the breeze, travel to the ear of Dumor,---Thy grief, Dumor, on that morning was great; but greater far was thine, O Ronnan!

NIGHT is gathering on the deep. The shore of Lava appears like mist. In the silence of night we reach its bay.

DARK and cold was that night, son of Arar; and unsheltered was the place of our rest, in the land of strangers. The obscured stars were seen, at times, through their torn robes of clouds. Some observed their colour of blood, and feared the sign. Frequent was the howling of gray dogs; nor unheard were the ghosts of our fathers. They looked out, at times, from their dark-skirted cloud; but their countenance seemed to be mournful.

RONNAN sat by a mossy stone. The shield of Struthorman hung above him, on a gray branch. The winds whistle through its thongs.---I sung, beside him, the tales of old, and the deeds of his father, when he fought, on the coast of Ullin*, with Commar of many hills.

—CEASE, said the chief, thy song, till the day shall light me to

U u

Lava;

* Ullin, Ireland, or, more strictly, Ulster.

Lava ; for my wrath is kindled against his race, at the mention of the wars of Ullin. It was returning thence his father pursued the deer of our hills, and sought my early death. I was young ; I could lift no spear, nor draw from its sheath the sword. One of his men had pity on my youth ; he saved me from Lava's spear. Our arms are still in his halls ; my father did not live to demand them.

—But what low and broken voice is that from the heath ? Dost thou not perceive that aged warrior drawing near ? His one hand seems guided by a child ; on a spear, that seems a burden, leans the other. Every little rill stops his pace, and on the withered furze the aged stumbles.—Who art thou, aged wanderer of the night ? Why so late on the lonely heath ? Hast thou lost the delight of thy soul ; or hast thou cause of woe, like me ?

“ I THOUGHT I heard a voice. Thou knowest, my child, the voice of thy father. Was it not he, bidding me to follow him to the place of his repose ? ”

“ No ; for I loved my father's voice, and I love not that which I hear. Their arms are like my father's arms ; but their voice is like the voice of strangers. ”

“ AND dost thou see their arms ? Then fly, my child ; for they are sent by Lava. Fly thou ; and, if they will, let them slay me : for the place is good ; I feel the tomb of thy father. ”

THE child with terror flew. The aged, trembling, stood. He stood, like the dun red-crested fowl of the heath, when the hunter, unperceived, comes nigh her brown sons. Quick, she bids
her

her little children fly, to hide their heads in moss; and calls the danger to herself, till they are safe.

PEACE be to the aged, said Ronnan, as he took him by the hand. Peace be to the child, said I, as in my arms I took him back. We are not come from Lava; neither do our swords bring death to the feeble. No, their safety is behind our shields: therefore rest thou here, and tell the cause of thy tears.

“ Here I will rest: here is the clay-cold dwelling of my son. To mourn over it am I come with his child. How silent under this peaceful stone art thou now, my son; thou whirlwind in the storm of battle! Silent is thy tongue, and weak thy arm: thy beauty is decayed, like the faded flower; and thy strength, like the withered oak, hath failed. Lamor! where is the boast of man, when the clod is become thy fellow? Only one sun hath run his course since thou didst, like him, rejoice in thy strength, and gladden the dim eyes of thy father. Like him too, darkness, thick darkness, forms now thy covering. Yet his light shall return, and he will again lift his dewy locks in the east, and rejoice. But when shall thy long, long night, my son, be over; when shall the slumberer of the tomb arise from his silent dwelling? But thou liftest thy head, my son, in other lands; and wanderest over brighter fields with heroes.—Weep on, O strangers! for he that is low was brave; and his soul, like your own, was a stream that flowed when the tale was mournful.”

WEEP for him we do, said Ronnan: but how is he fallen so soon; was it by the hand of Lava?

“ It was; and for no other cause, but that he loved the friendless. But in this my son was like his fathers. It was the mark of our

U u 2

race,

race, that we always stood up, though alone, to defend the weak. Our shield was a rock of brass before the unhappy ; our spear was a tree that sheltered the stranger.---When I was strong in my arms of youth, as the tenant of this tomb was yesterday, I attended the father of Lava, when he took the spoils from the halls of Struthorman. My words were loud against him ; for the heroes were absent, and there was none to oppose him. One child indeed there was, who scarce could wield, in place of a spear, a little arrow. That same he heaved, with all his infant-might, against the foe. On the foot of Commar the blunt end of it, harmless, fell. The gloomy chief turned his eye upon the child, and said, ‘ Hereafter this child may lift a more dangerous spear against us. Let us leave him on that desert isle, where we wait the morning’s light.’—— We came to the isle ; and often was the spear of Commar half-lifted over the son of Struthorman. My soul was grieved for the child of youth. He heard my sigh, and came near me. He admired the brightness of my arms ; he clasped his little hand about my knee. He smiled in my face : the tear glittered in his blue eye. ‘ My father !’ he said, ‘ I love thee.’ My heart melted above him : my soul within me was like the rushing of a stream ; like the straitened whirlwind in Atha’s cleft, when trees in the storm are bending. My secret tears fell in his yellow locks, as he hid his head in the skirt of my robe. As the roe, when she fears the hunter hath observed her haunt, the mossy bed where she hath hid her son,—or as the eagle of heaven, when she thinks that he hath seen her rock,—carries off, in the night, her young ; so I took the child in my arms, when failed the light. I bore him through the waves to his mother, who wept like the cloud of the shower,

flower, upon the lonely shore. She gave me this spear, and called the name of her child Ronnan *. But of Ronnan have I heard no more, till Lava came from the wars of Dumor, and told the mournful maid of his love, that he had left him wounded by the stream of his land.---My son knew my love for Ronnan. 'I wish,' he said, 'I had been near to lift the spear of Struthorman. It would rejoice to defend its owner.'---His words came to Lava's ear. His people gathered around my son at the feast.---This grave may tell the rest. Mark it, strangers; and when you pass, shed over it a tear, and say, 'This is the tomb of Lamor.'---Yes, and it will soon be the tomb of Runma. But if ye know the friends of Ronnan, bring them that child, that they may defend him; and give them this spear, for they will know it."

THE sigh bursts from the breast of Struthorman's chief. He falls on the neck of the aged. "In me thou hast thy Ronnan!"

THEIR tears fall, mingled, on the grave of Lamor. Heroes drop their spears, and weep, with joy, around them.

---BUT what noise is that, like the fullen murmur of a stream, when the storm is about to burst? It is the foe with their numerous host. They have perceived our coming, and their steel faintly glimmers to the dawn of the morning. Their light is like the thin stream of a rock, when sun-beams, bursting from between two clouds, are travelling through it.

RONNAN hears the song of battle, and the joy of his countenance

* *Ro'-thonnan*, "through waves;" alluding to the manner of his escape. He may have, probably, been the father of that Ma'ronnan (or *son of Ronnan*) mentioned in Ossian's battle of Lora:

Freiteach hliadhna ri mur Fhinn
Thug an diais bu chaoin dearg dreach,
Deagh Mhac-Ronnain nan fleagh gear,
Is Aildhe nach d'eur neach.

nance returns. He strikes his shield. His heroes are around him, a thick cloud, the gathering of the tempest on Dura.

As the spirit of night moves, with the collected blast of heaven in his course, when he prepares to pour his force on the groves of Ardven; when oaks hear its sound at a distance, and, trembling for its approach, already shake their leaves: So rushed Ronnan to the battle on the head of heroes.—Nor less terrible is the course of Lara. The sound of his people is like thunder in clouds, when Lara's fields are dismal. A thousand helmets nod on high; like a grove in flames is the blaze of spears.

BUT who shall tell the rage of battle? Thou hast seen, son of Arar, two black rocks rolling from opposite hills to meet in the valley below; a cloud of smoke rises behind, and follows the tract of each: such was the terrible onset of the people. Swords clash, and shields resound: heads and helmets fall: the dead are mixed with the dying: blood runs in a thousand streams, and the spirits of fallen heroes ascend on its thin airy smoke. See! to the edge of every cloud they cling, as clings the bur to the eagle's wing when she leaves the valley of dun roes, and flies to Moma's cloudy top.

BUT what eagles are these two, that still contend with rustling wings on the heath? No gray kid, no red-crested cock is the prey for which they strive, as from side to side they bound, and pour death in streams from their steel.—See! one stoops on his knee. His shield supports the half-fallen chief, as the rock supports the pine, which the storm has half-overtaken on Dunora.—Yield thy spear, said Ronnan; restore my beloved Sulmina. I seek not the death of my foes, when they lie before me on earth.

YIELD

YIELD I must, Lava replied, for my blood is shed ; the stream of my life hath failed.—Sulmina must be thine. Behind that rock, in her cave she rests. She looks down from its door on a blue stream, where waves an aspen tree.—Sulmina must be thine : but let her raise my tomb ; for she was the love of Lava the unhappy.

He ceased. He sunk on his shield ; and his people fled. Ronnan bade us spare them in their flight, as, swift, he ascended the rock to find the place of his love.—The blue stream he finds ; and the cave on its woody bank. But no Sulmina is there. The lone wind sounds in the empty womb of the rock. The withered leaf wanders there, on its rustling wing ; and no tract is found, but that of the lonely fox.

“ WHERE art thou, O Sulmina, my love ! Dost thou hide thyself from Ronnan ?—Come, Sulmina, from thy secret place ; come, my love, it is thy Ronnan calls thee !”

BUT thou callest in vain, son of grief ; no one replies to thy voice, save the rock and echoing stream.

AT length the howling of his dog is heard, in the field of fallen heroes. Thither he turns. There he finds Sulmina. She had rushed to the battle to aid her Ronnan. But death, on the point of a wandering arrow, came : its barbed head is in her breast of snow. The sparkling light of her eye is become dim ; the rose of her cheek is faded.

RONNAN, pale like her own half-breathless corse, falls on her neck, as drops the ivy when its oak hath failed. Sulmina half-opens her heavy eyes. The peaceful shade of death closes them again, well pleased to have seen her Ronnan.

LONG

LONG we bended our heads in silent grief, and shed our tears around Sulmina. At length the slow steps of Runma came. He spoke the words of the aged.

" WILL forrow recal the dead; will the cries of the living dispel their heavy slumbers? No; they still sleep on, careless of the cry of the mourner. But they are only gone a little before us to the land of their rest. A few more fleeting days, on their silent, swift-gliding stream shall pass, and our steps shall be in air with our friends. Do you not already see the cloud-skirted robe prepared for Runma. Nor shall Ronnan be long behind. The stream of grief wastes the bank on which his beauty grows. The young tree, that lifts there its green head, already half-bends over it in its fall. Let, then, our deeds of fame be many, while we can; and let not our winged days be wasted in mourning—Grief is a calm stream, O Ronnan! the steps of its course are silent. But it undermines in secret the beauteous flower that grows on its green bank: drooping it hangs its withered head; it falls while its leaf is but tender *."

RONNAN arose; but still he was sad. He gave the halls of Lava
to

* The following lines have in the original all the beauty of the objects which they describe, and all the smoothness of the stream which they speak of. Such soft and mournful sounds as *oi, ai, ui, iui, uai*, &c. occur so often in them, that the eye or ear, of even a stranger to the language, will at once perceive that they are expressive of some of the mournful and tender feelings. In this respect they are

an illustration of the remark made in a former note, p. 310, 311.

Tha Bron' mar an sruthan diamhair
Aig iarruidh fuid' lochdar na bruaiche;
Tha 'n gallan cheanadh ag aomadh,
A thog ri thaobh a gheugan aillidh,
Tuitheadh ar brou, mata, 's eireadh ar clu,
'S ar n uia' a' ruith air barraibh sgiathan.
'S' ciuin, a Ronnain, ceime a bbroin,
'S e caithe gu foil a bhilidh ualpe;
Tha 'n t up-ros air a chaithe fuid' bhonn
'S gu trom, trom, tha cheann a' searga.

THE DEATH OF ARTHO*:

A P O E M.

THE ARGUMENT.

ARDAR, lamenting the loss of his son Calmar, is informed of the death of his other son Artho, as he looked for his return from battle. The son of Arman comforts him by relating to him the gallant behaviour of his son. He informs him also of his own passion for Colval, who had been in love with Artho.—Her death is related; with the despair of Artho: and the poem concludes with some reflections of Ardar upon their fate, and upon his own situation.

SAD are my thoughts while alone! Thy memory comes, with all its grief, on my soul; Calmar, chief of heroes. Thou wert a sun-beam to thy friends in peace; a flash of lightning to thy foes in war. My son rushed, like a whirlwind, to the battle: many a young oak has been strewed in his troubled path. The return of his renown was like the sun when it sets. The heart of the aged, over him, was glad; I blessed the mighty in battle.

X x 2

BUT,

* This poem, which goes under the name of *Bas Airt 'ic Ardair*, or *Tuire' an Aofda*, appears to be the work of some ancient, but unknown, bard. Possibly it might have been composed by Ardar himself. At least no other poet appears throughout the piece; in which circumstance it differs from all the preceding poems. It begins with the following lines.

'S clannall m' aigne 's mi 'm aonar,
Calmar ag ciridh am smuainne;
'S a' liona mo chroidhe le mulad,
O nach faic mi tuille mo dheà' mhac.
Bu chofail e'n sìoth rì gatha greine,
'S am-bòile-chatha ri teine speuran;
Bu lionar gallan anns na roidibh,
'S e ruith mar loma-ghaoth sìos gu co'rag.
Bhiodh a phille' mar ghrian air faire,
'S an t aofda le gean cuir fallt air.

BUT, Calmar! thou art now no more; and the sun that shone in the house of thy father is set. Fuardo was a storm that seized my early sun; in one morning he extinguished all his beams. Darkness, since that day, dwells in Ardlia; for Artho is but a faint star, beside the light of his brother. Yet thou, my son, art also brave. But ah! thy arm may fail in the first of thy battles; for thy father cannot defend thee. I attempt to lift the spear, but I fall to earth when it does not support me. I attempt to lift the shield, but my knees tremble under its burden. O that I saw my only son return, in the midst of his renown, from battle!

BUT who comes in the beauty of youth, and stately as an oak of the mountain? His fair locks, like leaves, are waving around him. He is of the race of Arman, from the battle of the spears he comes.—Hail, thou beam of youth! whence are thy wandering steps? Art thou from the battle of heroes? Say, does Artho live; does he return to his gray-haired father? But why should I ask? thy mournful looks tell that he is now no more. Soon hast thou left me, my son, in darkness; Artho, shall I no more behold thee?—Calmar is gone; Artho is low: O that I too had been with my children! In the evening of life I am left without a son; like a blasted oak that is left alone on Malmor. The breeze shall descend from the mountain, and the blast shall blow from the desert; but no green leaf of mine shall either meet. The showers of the spring shall come, but no bough of mine shall flourish; the sun shall smile through the drops of dew, but no green branch of mine shall behold it. The wind whistles in my gray mossy head; its voice is, “Thou shalt soon be low.”—One comfort is all I expect before then; tell me, son of youth, how fell my son?

“ WITH-

“ WITHOUT his fame thy son did not fall in battle; the mighty marked, with wonder, his course, as he strode in the midst of foes. Like the thunder that breaks the groves; like the lightning that lays low their green heads, when sudden bursting it spreads terror, and again returns; so fought, so fell thy hero. The foes were troubled at the sight of Artho; they fled, they fell. Death from the hand of Artho roared behind them, like the rolling of a rock from Malmor, when it crushes the trees in its course, till it sinks in the lake below them. Such were thy deeds, son of fame! But the arrow of death came in the blast; and the people are sad, for mighty was he that is low.”

PLEASANT to me is thy tale, son of Arman; it is like the beam that dispels the clouds of night. Thou hast fought like thy fathers in their battles of youth, O Artho! and thy name, like theirs, shall be found in the song. When the valiant fall, a streak of light behind them is their fame; their friends behold the beam, and are glad. But the feeble die, and are remembered no more; their friends are beheld with scorn by mighty men. They walk in the silent valley alone, and shun the eye of heroes.

BUT, son of Arman, why that sigh; why these wandering looks? Hast thou lost a brother of love; or is thy soul troubled for the spouse of thy youth!

NOR have I lost a brother of love; nor have I a spouse that longs for my return from the battle. My sighs are for the fair of Carnmor; for her my wandering looks. My thoughts are of her in the day; of her are my dreams in the night.—But her soul is full of Artho. She saw the youth move to battle, and sad was her troubled soul. She came to that hill, and followed him far
with

